

One of



The Thirty



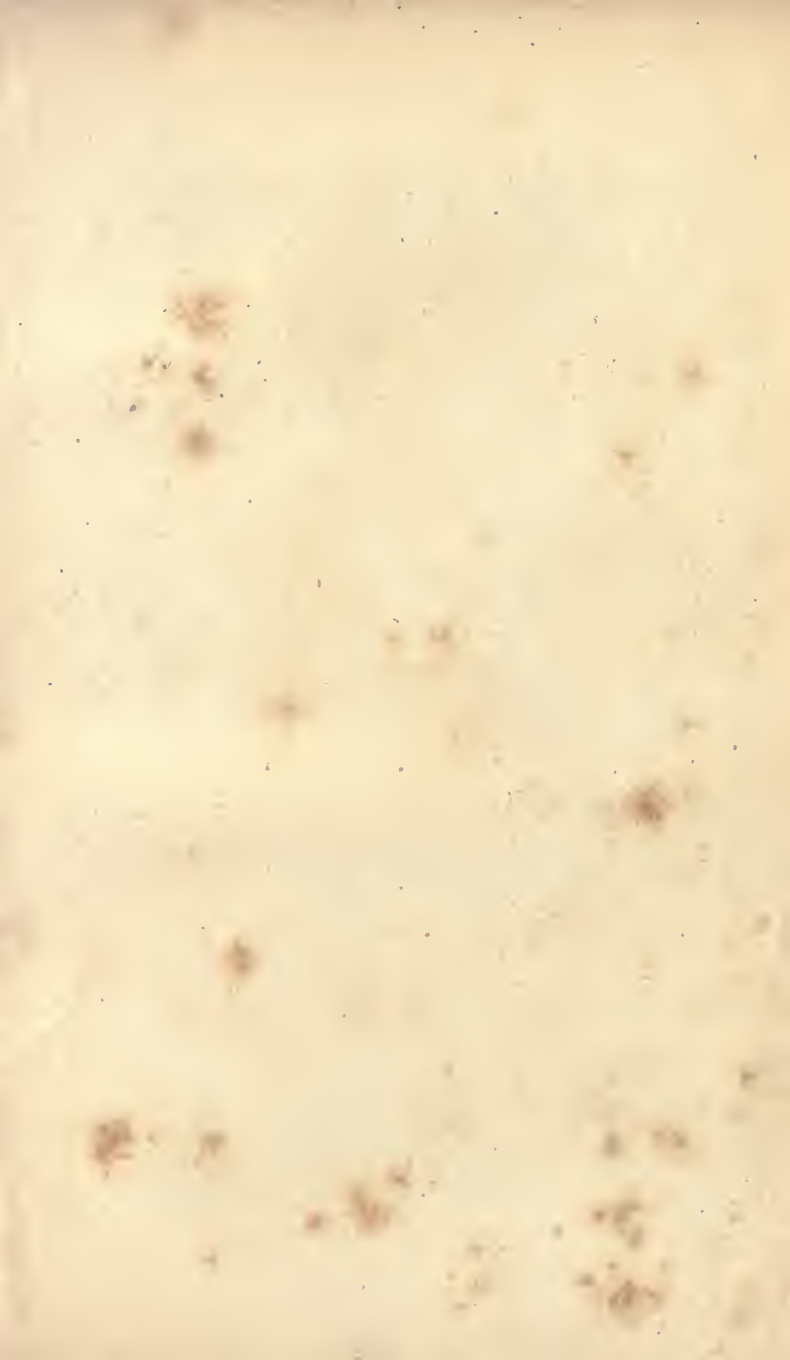
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ONE OF THE THIRTY.

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JUDAS RECEIVES THE THIRTY PIECES OF SILVER.

Copied from an engraving by SWAIN, drawn by M. W. RIDLEY, in the "Illustrated London News" of Aug. 12, 1871.

ONE OF THE THIRTY.

A Strange History,

AS TOLD BY THE THREE MEN TOLD.



THE HISTORY OF THE THREE MEN TOLD
AND THE HISTORY OF THE THREE MEN TOLD

EDITED BY

HARGRAVE JENNINGS,

AUTHOR OF "THE HINDOOS," "THE INDIAN EPIC," "THE HISTORY OF THE
HINDOOS," "THE HISTORY OF THE HINDOOS," ETC. ETC.

(1870)

LONDON :

JOHN CALDEN MOTIFN, 74 & 75, FLORENCE.



PLATE 710

ONE OF THE THIRTY:

A Strange History,

NOW FOR THE FIRST TIME TOLD.



VERA SICLI FIGURA.

(One of the "Thirty Pieces of Silver" for which Jesus Christ was sold.)

EDITED BY

HARGRAVE JENNINGS,

AUTHOR OF "THE ROSICRUCIANS," "THE INDIAN RELIGIONS, OR RESULTS
OF THE MYSTERIOUS BUDDISM," ETC. ETC.

(1870)

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שקל

“NUMMUM argenteum antiquissimum, expressis tamē Signis & literis conspicuum; in cuius altero latere forma esset vasculi illius, quod ‘Manna’ plenum in sacra arca ad sæculorum monumentum, Dei jussu & Moysis procuratione fuerat repositum: & in altero ramus ille admirabilis, quem in fasciculum virgularum plurimarum Aaronis nomine illatum (cùm illius sacerdotali dignitari ab æmulis quibusdam obtrectaretur), postera die populus omnis florentem, amygdalâque explicantem vidit, inscriptiones etiam fuisse in eodem nummo Samaritanis characteribus, quæ olim communes totius Israelis literæ fuerant, ante discessionem decem tribuum à duabus, lingua planè Hebraica, quarum exemplum ex altera parte erat SEKEL ISRAEL, quod Latinè sonat ‘SICLUS ISRAELIS:’ ex altera verò IERUSALAIM KEDOSSAH, hoc est ‘IERUSALEM SANCTA.’”

“ANTIQUITATVM IVDÆICARVM,” libri IX.,
auctore Benedicto Aria Montano His-
palensi: anno 1593; LIB. “Misnaioth
de Chelaim,” cap. 2 (par. 7) TRACT. DE
IUDAIM; cap. 4 (par. 7).

figures. "Inland Revenue Office, Somerset House"—
 "Account of some Unknown Period, being the Dream
 of an *anticipated* Memoir," with its natural climax, or its
 expected result in "nightmare." Then succeed sundry
 historical notices of the year 1856; and an occurrence
 relating to "Money and its Victims."

BOOK THE FOURTH

Contains, in *Chapter the First*, notice of the year 1809.

"The Twenty-Third Dragoons."

Chapter the Second.

(Date, 1789.)

"The Castaway."

Chapter the Third.

"Storm of the Bastille—a True Retrospect."

Chapter the Fourth.

(1692.)

"Isabella, the Nun."

Chapter the Fifth.

(1687.)

"Mr. Booty and the Ship's Crew."

Chapter the Sixth.

(1686.)

"The Barbary Rover."

Chapter the Seventh.

(1632.)

"Cat's Cradle." "The Magician."

Chapter the Eighth.

(1588.)

"The Portuguese Discovery Ship."

"Snake Island."

Chapter the Ninth.

(1478.)

"Little Eyelet."

Chapter the Tenth.

(1433.)

"The Bellringers."

Chapter the Eleventh.

(1312.)

“The Templar-Trial.”

Chapter the Twelfth.

(1220.)

“The Alarms of the Desert.”

“The Sand-Storm.”

Chapter the Thirteenth.

(1066.)

“The Battle of Hastings.”

Chapter the Fourteenth.

(415.)

“Pictures from the Portfolio of Adam, Rouge-*Dragon* Herald to King Arthur of Glorious Memory; with a strange display of the fatalities of the accursed Piece of Silver.”

Farther traverse of the Silver Piece to—

BOOK THE FIFTH,

In which is contained the “Earlier Story of the Piece of Money.”

Part the First.

(A.D. 312.)

“The Circus Maximus at Rome.”

Part the Second.

(Year 70.)

“The Fall of Jerusalem.”

Part the Third.

“The Temple at Jerusalem in the Year 33.”

(The Year of the Crucifixion.)

BOOK THE SIXTH, AND FINAL.

“A DREAM OF ETERNITY.”

(Close of the present record of the LEGEND, and of the ORIGIN of the HISTORY.)

"O day and night! but this is wondrous strange."

Shakspeare.



ONE OF THE THIRTY.

BOOK THE FIRST.

The Story commences with Events in London in the Year 1871, and opens with the Narrative called **HELENA FIELDING.**

INTRODUCTION.

IN the first place I wish to give an explanation of the means whereby I, Engel De Lara, press-writer, student of old literature, and contributor for many years to newspapers and to periodicals published in England, became connected with these singular facts; which are either detailed as coincident with my own experience, or commented upon as having been heard of in my attention to all interesting matters talked-of as going forward in London. With regard to this now immediately coming strange history, I may mention, as the introduction of myself, that I am respectable. This one word "respectable" embodies a world of information, but the party to whom the assurance of respectability is made must become satisfied of its truth. I shall offer no laboured attempts to supply my history—that is, my precise personal history. A recapitulation of business-events occurring in my sad struggle through

life would not enlighten or satisfy. I wish these few introductory remarks to stand for no more proof, and to be accepted as no fuller explanation of myself or of my purpose, or of the means at my disposal to establish, than they may be at first sight taken as carrying. I hope that I am an honest man—I have tried to be so; and I trust that the clearness with which I now ignore all fraud, and the emphasis with which I reject it, and the reluctance with which I should, spite of temptation, use tricky flourishes in my narration, may be appreciated as vehemently as I should wish. I hope that, spite of this wonderful history thus now laid before him, the reader may at last exclaim—"At all events, he who has come forward to introduce these marvels to us, readers, seems plain-speaking and a plain-dealing man, anxious to put what he has to say in as few words as he can command, and to shrink, when done, behind his curtain as quickly as he can—both good acts." "This quiet self-control, in this self-assured and impertinent age, proves that he is impelled to come on, rather than that he desires this particular platform." The reader will add this as his conclusion.

This is true. I desire not this particular platform; and yet I find myself upon the public stage compelled to speak. All do this when they have eager, questioning faces before them, desirous to know. But, my readers and dear friends, I am not mysterious; though my history is most mysterious. I am no miracle-monger. I am a man of simple habits and common-sense belief living in London, used to the pen in the plain sense, mingling miscellaneously in the world; "cutting and shuffling," pardon the familiarity, with "high, low, Jack, and the game." I am no hermit. I am a clear-headed, ordinary person; not given to rhapsody, hating superfine writing as I dislike fine clothes. I am a man insisting on his change with scrupulous exactness. I have something to lose in the world—most of all, the possibility of losing my character.* For truly, as I am thoroughly respectable, I

* Which, if I lost it, somebody else, perhaps, would pick up.

value most the "respect of the respectable"—that is, *the* respectable.

How the following account, which deals wholly of London, came into my hand, I shall not impart. But I begin my singular (and singularly romantic) true narrative with a description of occurrences—domestic occurrences—contemporaneous with all the people and the facts and forms which are about us now, at this moment, in London. Therefore the reader must not be astonished if I speedily relate some very surprising and bewildering circumstances. Mine is surely a most uncommon relation of facts, and one very difficult to reconcile with everyday truth. Believed or not believed, however, this is the record of real events occurring in this familiar London of ours in the summer of 1871. For we have in this town of our daily life not quite got rid yet of wonderful things, simple as we think ourselves, and very ordinary and commonplace as we consider not only the affairs which happen every day about us, but also the people that, "in our walks abroad," we are constantly meeting. In truth, we are very ignorant; and we are sadly disposed to disregard things that concern us very nearly. But if our guides are blind, is it surprising that we are blindly led, embracing "posts" as "pillars of truth" occasionally; not thinking that the index-finger is of wood?



HELENA FIELDING.

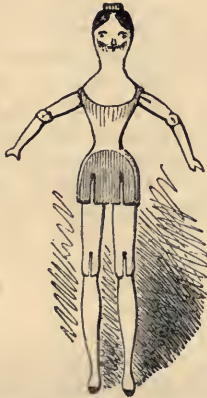
“Woman wailing for her demon lover.”—*Coleridge.*

SECTION THE FIRST.

READER, do you know Great Ormond-street, Lamb's Conduit-street? Or rather—as it might be more correctly described (upon the back of a letter, or on the slip of paper of directions given to a messenger or a *Commissionaire*)—do you know Great Ormond-street, Queen-square? For to get to it from the West, you must go through Queen-square. Queen-square is so named from “Queen Anne,” whose influence—“political” (though she had not much of this) and “domestic” (of this she had more)—is seen displayed over all this neighbourhood. It is, however, now in a decayed, semi-magnificent, and wholly shabby-genteel state; now-a-days mouldy. For railroads and “Belgravia” do not altogether seem to agree with the failing “constitution” of the Foundling Hospital, or with Queen-square, or Guildford-street and their adjuncts. To all this—once very respectable, now somewhat queer and untidy—section of London the great enemy, or brick-and-mortar “Abaddon,” is Gray's-inn-lane. This Gray's-inn-lane on its eastern, or vulgar, side has Cold-bath-fields; giving respectability, indeed, not to say fashion (for that could not stand it) a very “cold bath”—a shuddering sort of cruel feeling. Gloveless, napless, dinnerless, purseless is “poor” Gray's-inn-lane. It is only a wonder that it has not utterly starved down into rafters, whistling keyholes, and brickbats long ago. For so poor is the place that the sun himself, in his July strength (that can effect it with the “stiff side” of a cloud), has nothing seemingly wherewith to make a shadow in or about Gray's-inn-lane. So attenuate is the place, so wretched with poverty and meagreness, so abounds it with shifts, shallowness, shams, and shames, that it impresses beholders as utterly done up; too dried-up even for mould, too feeble for *fungi*. It is

the very contemptuous associative “fluff” of our old friend the Latin grammar—“*flocci, nauci, nihili, pili.*” Poor Gray’s-inn-lane is wholly dilapidated, yet defiant; and yet with “something dangerous” in it. But we back gladly towards the sun (who is always respectable), westerly; and we come from Gray’s-inn-lane to Great Ormond-street.

It was in the dining-room, or rather in the general “day-room” or “living-room” of a large old-fashioned,



Which is it to be?—“Dutch-Doll” or Woman? Woman or “Dutch-Doll?”

neglected, once grand old house in Great Ormond-street, that the following passages of slipshod conversation occur. The house was a boarding-house, and the speaker was a young girl—now, although in *déshabille*, and with flowing, unrestrained golden hair, of surpassing beauty. She had dark wonderful eyes, in the depths of which you discerned—well, never mind what you discerned! You could, however, see—when you looked, but not otherwise, of course, and when you began to think about it—high peril to yourself, my friend, in those eyes, and to others too; but of this latter fact (jealous already, you mark) you already began to feel that you did not “want to think,” simply

because you might be led on to "think too much," and to grow jealous of what *other* admirers thought.

You see by this, dear reader (who we are sure, being so respectable and prudent, have never been in love), that "boarding-houses" may be dangerous places for this affliction of love; for love is truly an affliction, be it fortunate or unfortunate love, smiled on or frowned at.

This will not be a "love story;" and yet it is allowable and beneficial, to old as well as to young, to dilate a little upon that beautiful passion. You might have known this girl (whom we have just introduced) and talked to her, and felt, and even have run, no unconscious risk. But there are a thousand inlets at which love steals in, and some gates are the most unlikely. For when we least look for such an unwelcome catastrophe, sometimes down falls the house. So in love, we must be always concerned in propping up the house of "man's honour" and of "woman's virtue;" two most precious "constructions," both in the sight of men and in the estimation of the angels. Your notice of her might have been indifferent. There might have been no seductive touching of the heart for this young woman to effect, unless the devil lay in wait for you. At sly, unconcerned moments of observation (when you had examined that face critically and noticed her charming demeanour), you might have felt the indifferent inner persuasion that there *was* something about her even that you "did not like"—that you thought commonplace, or common, or affected, or cheating, or untrue. We have indeed a theory that seems positively unaccountable in the ideas of love; and yet we entertain a firm conviction that it is well-grounded and true. Some calculation and observation in a busy life, concerned with a multitude of men, and of women too, as being "with them and yet not of them"—these experiences have led us to conclude—contradictory as it may seem—that some of the most tremendous subsequent passions (of love) spring from dislike at first. It may be Nature's distrust, and her fear of a great risk and danger, or of total disaster impending; as which disaster total all true violent love may be considered.

Thus some men tremble all over and turn pale in their fits of love; and these are the "great men at love," as well as at various other things. As the "moral" is the copy of the "actual," perhaps it is that the ignition, or lighting up, of the passion of love, is greatly similar to that of the *inflammation*—shall we say?—of gunpowder. The flame may pass innocently many times to and fro over the powder without its catching, although this is a dangerous game at which to play; for Beauty, like gunpowder, is to be run from, not courted or dallied with, or passed to and fro over, or we are lost; and it is children only who try these mad hazards—or handle guns, or touch women, fondling. So beware!

The cause of this lazy reluctance of the powder, even under provocation of the flame, to "go off" may be resisting, repellent disinclination, knowing the consequences, to "kiss the fire," so to say, and to "embrace" in that mad, fatal whirl which is destructive both to the fire and to the powder.

This is, doubtless, the *vis inertiae*—a laziness—grand, Turkish, and luxurious—a toying and yet lured evasion of the challenge; the *jeer*, as it were, at the proffered "match." Thus the sleeping explosion hugs itself in its "dreams" of slumbrous, tremendous quiet, and refuses to leap forth; simply because, if it did, it would clasp and tightly grasp fixed to its heart, till destruction overwhelmed, as love gratified—fiery love satisfied—will destroy, burning itself through, looking up (shattered and a ruin), when it has had its chance of enjoyment.

We would warn prudent, wandering, circumspect "Trojans" from this "Circe passion." What man ever was or is but a fool in love? Their great mother Venus (or Aphrodite) gave women ten thousand wiles and charms that they should win at will the very heart out of men's bosoms, and, as it were, place their white feet upon their slave's neck, plucking out, and reading off like A B C, "the heart of his mystery" almost, although not quite, let us hope, from the wisest man. Grant, young man, that your feelings in love are as heaven; still love is a disease, though from

heaven, which we, in this mortal state, would be much the better without; for love is inconvenient and tantalising, very humiliating, spoiling our business, perpetually tripping us up, costing us money (sometimes much money), making us ill, causing us to languish, and to look far-off for we know not what, letting music play our souls foolishly up as into sweet sentimental *perdition*, forcing us to wish to be somewhere else; and when we are at that somewhere else, inducing us to long to be back again in "No-Man's Land"—anywhere—somewhere. But with HER, the loved one, who is country, friends, home, hope, Life and Death itself—nay, *Time*, and the *Longing Personally to Fill that Time*. We would put it to any sensible man (but no man in love is ever sensible) whether all this is not true, although intolerable. Rather—oh, stricken man!—than this poor *cooing*, languishing, pitiful, silly "bird"—as which we will figure this conquered creature—"pigeon-livered, lacking gall"—dare thou to be an "eagle." Fix thine eye to the peak—the mount! Try the (at first) *faint* beat of thy strong masculine *wings*; and then these enchantments, these tinkling, silver childish chains of love shall snap and drop from thy nervous volves (now sails, as it were, in the *whisk* of the wind), gathering thunder as they urge or mount—higher—higher! till thou seest "Sun" for Cupid's false, feeble light. Unworthy men! scorned of heroes; of which number try to be one somehow.

Two words of expostulation. What is in that mortal languor induced in love?—most overpoweringly in *uncertain* love? We will tell you what. There is in this latter dismay, terror, pain, and wounds to the heart, which we must hide under penalties; both in this world—man's world—and out of this world, which is God's own true world. To confess our suffering in love is our undoing. Beauty occupied with itself, and marching Venus-armed on to new triumphs, laughs at men's sufferings. Woman's prizes are broken and crushed hearts. Are not the agonies that escape and the aching of men's hearts the attestation and glory and her power? That is the spoil that she mentally parades in her cunning re-

tirement, and that secretly she "counts up" and "weighs," as in the golden scales of her vanity; picking, and fingering, and choosing. Indeed, she will use some of these small trophies, but judiciously, with wondrous wiles and arts unbearable (will she use them), as fresh bait for new victims—poor struggling little gold and silver fish of fools of men, as out of that great bright "Lake of Love," for her! Deep in the depths of woman's mind, which is unfathomable in its magic, mysterious, constant *faithlessness*, may lie the philosophical truth that that "Unintelligible Phenomenon," or Doll, called "Female," admires men only who despise her, and treat her with contempt. Mind, reader, that we do not launch this taunt at ALL the sex. And that woman, who is child plus —, flings herself on her knees, and casts up her white little braceleted (as if prisoned) hands, beseeching (though treacherously) to that "Man" who, in looking over her head at something else that is real, defies (and is able to defy) her. Some of the extramalicious have even said that to women men's sufferings in love show all the more beautiful and delighting according to their very racking intensity; and that, in this, men's pangs assimilate to the throes of the dying dolphin, whose iris-like, coruscant, dazzling colours, show all the more lustrous and blinding when the pain is least tolerable. In the vehemence of the writhing (say naturalists) lies all the unconscious, excruciating splendour of the tormented creature. In this mute expression of the sufferer's torment lies all the intoxicating glory and beauty which confounds and delights.

The Devil, if he is an *artiste*, which we think he probably is, from the splendour and dusk nobleness of his works, and from that high price which his highly-wrought, matchless wares command in the market—especially his wares of flesh and blood—must really enjoy, from the above reasons, boundless æsthetic pleasure and wonderful exaltation in men's sufferings, seeing what a prodigious field of pain it is, in this life, in which (open to his range critical and all-capacious, and to his all-equal taste). And he has power (until his appointed Time) to luxuriate and triumph.

As we dislike (doubtless a foolish prejudice) quite to register as a Devil's servant, and as we decline (coldly and firmly, but politely) some of these intense, promised joys which belong properly to the Devil, and which the angels cannot give, we confess that we are unable to kill a fish. And as to handling a gun to blow a poor beautiful pheasant up into spangles, why, we had rather that even our very expectant sporting dog should turn up his wise nose at our failure; and go trotting back contemptuously home again, at once in disdainful recognition of the zany we were, and in disgusted abandonment, leaving us with the trees (mean and merciful as we), which cannot be wounded.

But we have strayed away from the dining-room, or the general guests' or inmates' room, of this aforesaid Boarding House in Great Ormond-street; and from the Mother we have wandered (the proprietress), and from the Daughter, the dangerous young girl, the light, grace, and attraction of the house. And we will now pass back to these to more amusingly occupy us.

SECTION THE SECOND.

THE mother of the young lady whom we have described in the preceding section was careful and elderly. She was "woman" or "lady"—to be styled either as you surveyed her from her own inferior level or from your better one. Probably your own (and now I am going to flatter you, reader) is pretty considerably above that shabby-genteel station which I allot to these two individuals thus now in discourse. There was a cat on the hearth and a canary in the window.

We will listen to the conversation.

"But I really must go, mamma—I really must go, indeed. I have set my mind upon it. And you know how I have been working at that pretty figured full skirt which you admired so much. You know father, although he always says so little, took his pipe out of his mouth really to look at me. And he grumbled a murmur of silent approval, I know, because he frowned,

which he always does when he thinks I look *well*; and he laughed a little, and he called me silly. I understand his ways very well. He thought how nice I should look in this dress at the Ball. And I know that I *shall* look beautiful—at least, the dress will; and you will lend me your pearls, mamma? Now you really will let me go, my dear mamma—and go with Mr. Jerningham? Come, now, you *will*—I know you will. For hasn't Mr. Jerningham been so kind as to get me the ticket, which he had a difficulty to do with the committee, who don't like strangers, and giving too many tickets?"

"Not so true this, miss," we will here interject as a caution, "with *such a Ball*; though you and your mother do not know the fact."

"And Mr. Jerningham will go with me, and see me safe home again, because he is *so* kind and *so* attentive. And *somebody* must go with me, because I know *you* won't go; nor will papa go either. And I will come away very early—after a dance or two; and the music is so beautiful. Oh, and I shall *look* so well, and tell you all—everything about it! And Mr. Jerningham is always so gentlemanly, and he is so free with his money. He will pay for the cab, so that won't cost you anything; and I will knock at your bedroom door and say, 'I am in;' and I will be downstairs just as early, indeed earlier, the next morning. So I *must* go, mamma. Indeed," said Helena decidedly, with her eyes sly and sparkling *as if she meant it* (but away her eyes went like lightning when she caught her mother's irresolute, fond, proud gaze)—"indeed I *must* go."

The charge of a young, beautiful girl, intent on going to a ball, is a serious responsibility for any affectionate father or mother to delegate. It is as the handing out of a precious jewel to be gazed-at by the curious, envious, and malicious; by the dangerous, and by all sorts of eyes; and She may be touched—not always by the devoted or the chaste hand—bowing before that unspeakable "divinity" which doth hedge "a maiden" (granting even that this latter-meant admirer be a Quixote)—of a "knight errant" or a "gentleman." He, if a gentleman, when on duty, though the place of

temptation be a desert, and "She" (dependent and intrusted) be so glorious in her fascinations that a cloistered Monk might yield—and, yielding, almost be forgiven for the temptation's sake—shall be as ice, so fenced and fortified in his respect from his own innate feeling of trusted honour—(although of burning fire, naturally, within)—that he remains the pulseless image—an impersonated TRUST; because he is truly the rare, grand character—a *gentleman*. Yielding not, because of his *honour*—although "She" (of another class quite to the foregoing supposed lady-example) shall be capable of yielding to all the world. Lust hath nothing with the purity of gentlemanliness, ye modern men. Such was the romance, such were the feelings of the days of "knights-errant;" at which old-fashioned gentlemen's ideas ye laugh; but which it were well if you were forced sometimes to imitate—aye, even on the pavement (at midnight) of Regent-street, of all seemingly unlikely places, for much honour, in the world. For Woman in distress and needy, and appealing with those "right true keys" that unlock the heart, is "sacred." And he, on these occasions, is no "Man" who turns a deaf ear or averts with a cold, disdainful, or unmelting eye from tears, and from some tones. Wonders of women, abstractly pure as snow (that is, soul-pure), though profaned with ten thousand necessitated touches, have walked some of those "stony-hearted" London streets, really immaculate as the vestal, and "calm as an Angel through the Dragon's den." Ay, even as an "Angel" threading her way through "troops of devils." And all the while, and close behind—for there is still, even on this very night, in the streets the surviving magic of the older, greater times—invisibly, doubtless, has followed her Cherub-Guardian, with his ghostly sword—trenchant from that God's armoury of Immortal *Pity*. This saving glaive of the Archangel shall preserve, cutting way through the "nets of hell." And in due time it shall vindicate, and, if it should be so adjudged—AVENGE! For trampled women may be trampled only out of this world to soar!

Then *fear* women—ye men of nightly pleasure—men

of the world—or rather fear God! Fear women—if not for themselves (for at fear, in this respect, you will perhaps laugh); if not on their own account—poor, weak, simple, beautiful, easily-betrayed creatures as they are—flowers to be plucked from the side of the road in a holiday in the sunshine, and thrown away when the storm comes—selfish, self-gratifying, mean men! if ye do not fear women for themselves, fear at least for those dread beings who have them in charge. Dread those Terrible Guardians—relentless God’s people; implacable, all-powerful, invisible—who (Heaven-commissioned) by night and by day (awfully alike), keep watchful guard each over his own appointed. And there, perhaps, in that place where (from appearance only) you would least expect. For behind the Woman—when man’s wrong and when outrage are offered her—may be the terrible Witness; and the Witness whose report against you shall (in the judgment) be the great death—that of *both* body and soul! And this price to pay is one that will *terrify*; for (after all, as you think) your little, pleasant, venial transgressions: thought creditable, rather than otherwise, in this devil’s world. And you concluded, too, that the Real Devil was so nicely and slyly—thanks to the successful efforts of modern scientific men, and of so many really rational theologians—so cleverly and thoroughly got out of the world; so that you could indulge your little vices in peace, and with the advisable ease of mind. Of Nature, merely, which is plastic and easily conciliated, you have no fear. But that “Terrible Devil”—of whom you are warned as possible, though so strictly anonymous, although you do not believe him—this Devil may lay in wait for you some by-time when the world cannot help. And all the “explaining people,” gathered round your deathbed stupidly in perplexity, may be only able to falter a recognition of your scared looks as realising SOMETHING. The truth and the error of this—they being firm in the world and you *infirm*, being “handed out of it” (by ghostly ministers—servants of this very Devil whom they supposed they had wound into the innermost secrets-of, and exposed as nothing

but the "forces of nature")—puzzle, at the same time that their confusion strikes mute and alarms.

We are not going to introduce now any very mysterious, out-of-the-way, or extraordinary person or hero (for "person" or "hero," are the same, and are alike "Tom Noddies" in a certain sense), when we mention that this Mr. Jerningham—who seems so familiarly referred to as well-known by Miss Helena Fielding—is a gentleman-boarder, who had spent a very agreeable, pretty time of it in this particular Boarding-House in Great Ormond-street; during the day occupying himself in study and work of a kind; for he was very clever, as he was bound to be to earn the respectable money whereupon he lived, combined with a moderate independent income of his own (this latter was very, very slender, but still gentlemanlike). And during the social evening, time after time, he was occupied in flirting with Miss Helena and setting off quietly his personal recommendations; of which he possessed some. But principally his power lay in his knowledge, and in his capacity to *talk*; for this, after all, goes a long way in female ears, and when stimulating elegant, appreciative female fancy; for woman was always accessible to beautiful talk, to powerful appeal, to earnest eloquence, to able persuasion.

"Good sentences and well-pronounced"—helped from the first time of the listening Eve, with her throbbing pulses, with her beautiful dilating eyes, her rising, interested bosom, her mounting colour, and the arch little sneer, just lifting the corner of her perceiving, scarcely-suspicious, cleft rosebud of a fairy lip—pouting and pettish (I doubt not), even with the flattering "Snake," who must have been a very gentlemanly snake, twining and winding, and who, we may be sure, knew well how to wreath his seductive talk, while he gesticulated gracefully, as into enchanting, glittering swathes (or chains) of lovely words and tones for poor, beautiful, believing Eve; with the thorns—or rather with the "big thorn"—concealed: that thorn (or Dart) wrested from amidst the steel rushes of the ghastly Styx, that was to slay both her, bodily, and that fool the man. This could

have been no "Serpent" in Eden. We have mistaken—all have mistaken—the word and the meaning. The "Snake" must have been some famous "Man-Talker," with a silver-tipped (lawyer's) tongue from the Chancery of Hell. It was sure an angel of cherubic beauty, who (doubtless), shorn, as plumes, of his intolerably keen splendours (which light would have been total darkness if displayed to her fleshly sight, but which was all the brighter, grander, and the more glorious for his lucent or "Lucifer-like" contrary gifts to those of the dark real heaven), betrayed poor Eve. His beauties came from out the stores of the shining magazines of Pandemonium. It was no "Snake" (we say) according to our ideas of snakehood (jewel-studded as might be his insinuating slimness, and he blooming all over with his mystic, bewildering pathos, and with the immortal concern excited by it—fascinating to the enchanted, pitying Woman's eye. Doubtless poor Eve wept for that Irrecoverable Banishment (in the Miltonic sense). It was surely no snake—but some "Lost, beautiful, stray Child of Heaven"—a "Chief" among "the Chiefs," and a "Leader" among the "Leaders"—but no scaly "Snake" who beguiled the "Woman." For he wrought "Ruin," of the prodigious, unutterable, eternal character of which, the very stars are forbidden to tell. The stars in heaven, in their mysteries, alone spell out suspicion of the FALL—and those stars as yet unseen—so long are the destined purposes of God rising to apprehension;—stars yet undescried in time by short-lived Man. Surely Woman, then, has something to repair in this (although unconscious) fall of the Great First, Matchless, unmatchably Beautiful, Traitress, who threw the poisoned chains around that destined upward flight for "Man," and drew him down again back in bending, ruinous, pitying love to HER whom he yet would not forsake, and who had nevertheless destroyed him. Never for him—except in the "Redemption"—was after that the HEAVEN! From that fatal moment when the first eclipse came over the stars; and when their flames changed as into lead; when the brightness of the "light" on earth was con-

verted as to the redness of the "fire" on earth—when the bright doors of heaven closed utterly against him; and when the inverted swords of the angels pointed (now) to him the "other way;" *downward*, as if to punish, and not *upward*, FROM HIM, as if to guard; then "Man" from the Demi-God sank to the *Creature*. And the "Woman," who had wrought all this mischief, was warned back to her convicted length—there to trail, prone in agony, in despair—in floods of bitter, sharpest tears, in dole immortal and never-ending; in penalty, disgrace, and dust. But at last, in the possibility of forgiveness, as the virgin "Sheba" raised once again to present the "NEW MAN"—the sacred second-born of "appeased Time," conquering with his foot upon the ABYSS.

There in that portentous pause—blackening for Death; and then at last (when at the darkest) lightening for "Life Anew"—that pause of awful momentary doubt in the on-march of Fate—there in that single penitential "throb" between "Life" and "Death"—immortal death, immortal life—there, in that miraculous moment, the "Great Dragon"—once and for all—was trodden over, with his outstretched, conquered wings wide—wings, that otherwise would have beaten commensurate in triumph through the "waste of nature"—by the Divine Maid, in all her sinless, holy unconsciousness (palm in hand), with the clear, cerulean eyes of Faith looking straight on, (*and up*) regardless. Because it was the stars that drew—and because it was the changed purpose of the Propitiated God that spared—spared even to triumph out of that nameless magic, that polluting guilt—from which the Sun hides as from a curse.

Thus we can find words of magnificent laudation, sometimes, for women, dear Reader, as you can see from the above. Even in this—our romantic mythic story of the "Fall of the First Man" and of the "First Woman"—are our compliments to the "Idea of Woman" expressed; for which she ought to be grateful. They are the thoughts, in fact, of the greatest eulogist of the sex who was ever heard of, and he was Henry Corne-

lius Agrippa, in his famous book, *De Nobilitate et Præcellentia Fæminæi Sexûs, ejusdemque supra Virilem Eminentiâ*. Some ideas like the above, for Henry Jerningham was a very clever young man—that strange thing, a “genius,” in fact, rose, as he would sit, sometimes, talking—which he would do by the hour—with Helena Fielding; spelling over her face like Hamlet reading Ophelia’s,



The “Cottage in the Country” in which Helena passed her infancy.

and wondering from what hidden world—whether of devils or of angels—came her marvellous beauty.

The conversation occurring between the mother (Mrs. Fielding) and her daughter, Helena, which we have detailed some time before, may serve to trace out the principal facts of the history of the persons. Mr. Nelson Fielding, the father of Helena, was a man about fifty-eight or sixty years of age, but he looked much—very much—younger. His occupation was that of a

confidential (so far as his employer, a strange man, chose to be confidential) clerk to an insurance agent or broker in the City—as that terrible place of sinister (or regular) commercial activities, the “City,” is called. Mr. Fielding’s full income was not very full—indeed, it was sometimes empty. It was not a very large one. All that portion of his income coming out of business and arising from the City was not grand. This commercial source although, contradictorily speaking, it was insurance itself with which it had to deal, was anything but “insured.” Mr. Nelson Fielding, therefore, sought to augment his annual receipts by taking a few boarders at his house in Great Ormond-street, which boarders certainly did “come in,” and “go out” occasionally—if not “out-at-elbow.” Mr. Nelson Fielding was a man of agreeable manners when he chose to put on a certain sort of veneer politeness. He had deportment, and he possessed the air and the modes of speaking, not only of a solidly respectable, in the main, but of a young man. Especially in the evening was he talkative, keen, sarcastic, and amusing. He would, then, melt into a certain Bloomsbury benignity. And over his glass of spirits-and-water he would grow judicious and judicial, and gravely jocose. He sugared even the lemon with instructive, but possibly with insincere (because tried), good-nature. He was a generally well-wishing, clear-headed man of the London world; a favourite with very many. Simple widows (“boarders” often), seeking sympathy and help over their own half self-suspected mistakes—women with a little money to “put out,” and to talk of, and so on. This class of folk were fond of his society. The Boarding-House rarely wanted boarders. Mr. Nelson Fielding and his wife, though they set up only “half” a table, were esteemed as semi-elegant, practical-unpractical people—with one hand “gloved” and the other “ungloved,” and somewhat restless.

The attentions of Mr. Jerningham to Miss Fielding very soon commenced, growing eccentrically demonstrative after he was an inmate. He downright fell in love at last. And as nobody can “hide fire”—even be it but as the spurt of a lucifer-match, which

must fix your attention—his respectful admiration and his face-seeking looks did not escape observation. Miss Helena smiled, looked grave; but was pleased at all this. Mr. Jerningham was of an anxious, sensitive, jealous, really loving, and therefore of a foolish disposition. Partiality and fancy under these circumstances, and preference, is sure to betray itself—love induces watchfulness; for jealousy goes with love, and love becomes very *distract*, and absurd, and declarant, and traitorous to itself. Real, eager love is unnatural, and a madness, and a betraying lure in this commonplace world; and jealousy ties arms and legs, and paralyzes your tongue, and incommodes. The conduct of a sincerely-loving man must always be obnoxious to “flaws and starts”—those moonstruck fits, “Impostors to true fear.”

The man in love (and therefore of necessity blind and jealous) is absorbed, serious, dictatorial, and sententious at the wrong times. He moralises, and speaks fine things, perhaps beautifully—often when matters (rightfully taken) are in the stupid, comic condition for all that he then says. And he is comic, jaunty, apparently silly and indifferent to grave things; disposed to say nothing wise or to the purpose when he ought to be ready and fluent at apt remark, sage and practical, because serious things are under discussion. In truth, the lover “misfits his moods”—a great pity if a man wants to be successful, and run with applause in the race in this world. For the old gentleman, Time, is quick (old fellow though he be) in his steps—hobble as he does, jerk as he does; and he will not wait until you justify yourself, or adjust your walk correctly into all the proprieties. He will not trouble about your “misfits” of moods becoming “fits.” You must be just what people expect you to be at the moment. “Wool-gathering” will only catch “burrs.” You must be natural; and your speech must flow with the current—spite of your agony (sometimes), my dear, tortured, jealous man—or you will fail utterly; be laughed at, and become ridiculous—which in the presence of your mistress is death in love: it being all over with you when the dear one once begins to laugh *at* you, instead of

with you. Oh, pray offer not your romantics (my charming talker) to women at the wrong time. Let them be at peace sometimes. It is not because you are a hero in her esteem, but because you are *not the farthest-off* her idea of a hero, that you have hold with a woman. And as to coquettes—you might as well try to warm your hands at the flame of a candle as to expect to elicit real love out of the mind of a coquette. To a woman of this kind there is a succession of lovers (equally welcome), like as the renewing figures offered to the child's eyes in the wave of the wind-stirred tapestry. It is insane to blame this fickleness in women. Women want something—nature insists that they shall desire something quite different to mere stupid adoration offered as to a goddess—who is, of course, all cloud. What profiteth this a woman? At this they stare with stupidity; or resent (where they have spirit). as a farce. Anxiety, and too much respect in regard of her (betrayed to her) bring the lover all the mischief in the world with his beloved. For women, by nature, have contempt for men who show too much love for them; inasmuch as they know themselves, and, by intuition, understand their own sex too well. They feel nothing but pity and contempt for the man thus lost to common-sense; and they avert instantly, with their prepossession, at the moment that the fool of a lover thinks that he is securing himself the most firmly by the pouring of his ardour.

All this happened with Helena Fielding and Henry Jerningham.

“My dear Mrs. Dancer, I am right,” said Mrs. Fielding to a lady boarder, one evening, when Miss Helena had gone to bed. She had averred that she had “a bad headache;” and she gave this as her reason for retiring—an excuse for withdrawal not infrequent, and somewhat successful, we believe, with young ladies. *Old ladies* are not so often troubled with sentimental headaches, or any “headaches.” Miss Helena looked, however, very well; and this notwithstanding that she had been crying, and was certainly pale. Helena truly had betaken herself to her room—like a bird to its golden perch—to think, and to murmur the name of

Henry Jerningham. She stood undisturbed and thoughtful in the quiet of her own room—which was nearly at the top of the house—and she locked her door to prevent even her mother coming in. As to the top of the house, the best poetry, as the best love, is perhaps in “attic.” During the progress of her undressing, before betaking herself to bed, she was in perplexity and thinking. And thus she stood, like the graceful statue of a Hebe, or of her namesake, Helen, with one article of dress after another dismissed in a picturesque heap to the floor—a very picture of languishing, beautiful “contented-discontent;” disrobing as of the loose, gauzy clouds off the lovely moon. She would lie awake for hours now, thinking tenderly of Henry Jerningham. And she would be starting off soon, in a new, petting and pettish, and “sweetly-bitterly” jealous reverie (for even hollow-hearted woman can be jealous), with every faint rumble of the Hansom cab-wheels down the street, from the distance coming near in the deepening silence, as the clocks struck—each, though farther and farther off, with still greater seeming precision and distinctness.

But to return to the Boarding-House, and to the party below stairs.

“My dear Mrs. Dancer, I know I am right,” repeated Mrs. Fielding; “and I am fearful, while I say I know I am right.”

“You must excuse our being so occupied with this subject,” interposed Mr. Fielding; “but I think we are correct in our ideas as to all this flirtation. My daughter, of course, is dear to me and to Mrs. Fielding. I have had much talk with Helena; and, Mrs. Fielding has had long arguments about this foolish attachment which we all can see, but which she, feigning, denies.”

“Although your daughter tries to hide it, it is evident,” said Mrs. Dancer.

“Yes, she does deny it,” Mr. Fielding went on; “and Mr. Jerningham tries to be very careful when he is in the room with us; and Helena is really very sly—very sly, poor thing! But I don’t know—in fact, I don’t like this Mr. Jerningham; and I think he has deceit and too much thought in his eyes; and his

manners are so unaccountable, and he is so strange altogether, and moody."

"We are afraid they meet somewhere *unbeknown* to us," remarked Mrs. Fielding, unaware or regardless of the slip in her grammar. She looked up with a keen, motherly—that is, well-informed, surveying, business—eye. She compressed her lips, and glanced up at Mrs. Dancer from some work of commonplace "thread-and-needle" character, which she was prosecuting to completion with mechanical, finger-and-thumb exactness, spite of the alarmed interest with which she spoke—naturally since it referred to the destinies of her daughter, whose feelings she knew had passed in his favour very far—perhaps gone after a cheat and a betrayer.

"You *don't* mean to say," cried Mrs. Dancer, "that they meet in the street?" alarmed, truly, like the respectable woman that she was. Then to her own daughter (a pretty girl, with a small waist, and a blushing, hesitating, attractive manner, *not when she was looked at, but when she was not*, which is curious)—"Lydia, my dear," said the mother, "what do you seem to be looking so straight out at? Go on stringing those beads, my dear, do. You are thinking of other things than you ought. There; you have dropped some beads in your nervous thoughtlessness. Pick them up, my dear, and go on with your work; and don't attend to what Mrs. Fielding and I are talking about." And of course Miss Lydia immediately attended all the more—which is obvious; only she did not drop any more beads—*she only dropped her eyes*.

"Mr. Jerningham is very clever—exceedingly clever. There is no denying this; and he is a well-looking young man," resumed Mr. Dancer.

"A well-looking man!" exclaimed Miss Prichett, another boarder, with a sudden impulse and joyously. Miss Prichett was reading *Red as a Rose is She*, and she was balancing herself, as if she liked the book much, in an American rocking-chair. "Mr. Jerningham well-looking! Why, he is beautiful; he is quite like a poet."

Here was a "lion named among ladies."

Mrs. Dancer and Mrs. Fielding looked cross and disturbed at this ardent word; and Mr. Fielding impatiently, as if he thought Miss Prichett Lais-like and foolish, puffed his pipe.

Now this Miss Prichett was "very fair," and a "perfect lady," as the single grown-up servant in the house called her, in her acute confidence with the little dusty scrub, who, with her shoes down at heel, and occasionally with half a stocking, "ran upstairs and downstairs, and into my lady's chamber." Miss Prichett (a very nice person) might be described as a stately Grace betwixt and between an "old maid" and a "young maid." You might have been disposed to think her either old or young, as you viewed her from before or behind—the latter view doubtless was the safest. Miss Prichett was neither a nymph nor a muse; neither a racket nor a romp, nor a mope; neither an "old girl" nor a "young girl;" but she oscillated very effectively between these two last. She was very clever, and she was romantic, using very constantly very fine words, writing in a diary, with a blue ribbon, dressing very well, paying her way scrupulously out of a very, very small income—well-defined and limited, and made to go a long way, like herself. After excitement, or when "working after dinner" (at which madness the Vicar of Wakefield protests, saying that his daughters abstained from it in the fear of "reddening their noses," and thus "spoiling their beauty"), the "blush rose" in Miss Prichett's cheeks would sometimes transfer as to a "crushed rose" on the tip of her nose. Spite of all "drawbacks and advances"—too much of either of which offends men—Miss Prichett was handsome; and she had a soft, sneaking heart secretly for men; a heart limpid as water for the attractions of the other sex, notwithstanding her light laughs and pretended incredulity at all love—which men rarely talked-of in her presence; except in regard to some "absent party"—afflicting Miss Prichett, meantime, by never looking her way; which was disappointing and cruel. Though Miss Prichett seemed quickly (under a very little encouraging sun) to recover from her disappointment and

drooping, like an upspringing flower. This was owing, perhaps, to the strength of her self-opinion.

"What a singular, spirited young lady you are, Miss Prichett!" said Mrs. Fielding. "You are really quite romantic, and make me nervous."

"You read too many books, Miss Prichett, and look at too many pictures," said Mrs. Dancer. "No man can be 'beautiful,' can he, Lydia dear? A man is only good-looking, or not ordinary, or not ugly; and only 'so-so' in his personal appearance."

"Or perhaps 'handsome,'" suggested Mrs. Fielding. "Some of the Life Guardsmen that I have seen in St. James's-street are very handsome, and they ride such beautiful horses; and there is such a fine band goes before them, playing *such* tunes!"

"Too big—too big—these Life Guardsmen are," grunted Mr. Fielding, who was envious.

"What do *you* think, my dear?" asked Mrs. Fielding suddenly of Miss Lydia. "You look as if you were thinking about it."

Miss Lydia started as if she was caught thinking of something certainly similar, and she absently said—"Oh, Mr. Jerningham is not handsome at all." Now the talk at that moment was not about Mr. Jerningham, or his good looks, or his bad looks. "I think him very plain. He is not, by any means, the man that I should fancy for a husband; and he is so strange and absent," remarked Miss Lydia, going on with her deceit, and thinking quite the reverse; because she was half in love with Henry Jerningham secretly herself. And she used to stop (we, who know everything, can tell the reader) sometimes ten minutes or a quarter of an hour at a time to look at a beautiful picture of "Shelley the Poet," because she thought that it was so like Jerningham—who talked wondrously lovable mad things like a poet; or like a very "handsome" Don Quixote, if there could be such a "Don Quixote;" or a wise "Absolom," or a steady, grave, highly respectable "Lord Byron." The picture-shop in Lamb's Conduit-street, with all sorts of "album heads" of women, of courtiers, and heroes in it—where the lovely female faces

(and forms) lured you (most graceful, and French and fanciful); and were enough to fire—like tinder, with the sparks running sharp all over it—the too easily seduced (molten, like wax) imagination—shall we say of “churchwarden” or charity-boy?—that is, if anything like genius ever mingles in the constitution of either of these two stray, queer specimens of class—which is very doubtful; fancy being rare and dangerous amongst modern people.

“Miss Prichett can afford to be romantic,” said Mrs. Fielding, “for she is well off, and she has a number of high people to know her, and rich friends. As for poor Helena, she has her living to get; and so romances and novels, and balls and fine dresses, and fashionable things she ought not to think of.”

Poor Miss Prichett’s claims to “great things” were, in truth, very slender desires for small things. But all things are comparative. Miss Prichett had a comfortable little independence. She had not had either to turn governess, or ballet-dancer, or shopwoman, or bargirl, in order to obtain a living. She was possessed of a snug, unobtrusive income of sixty pounds a year, payable quarterly—“in four equal quarterly payments”—as the lawyers define the usual strict rent we pay. These cheques were forthcoming through a grocer and oilman in the City, whom Miss Prichett called her trustee. “Trustee” is a high-sounding, advantageous word for widows to use, and for unmarried damsels to desire. And the days of Miss Prichett’s receiving money were also days of purchases and of presents by Miss Prichett—much of the former; just a little of the latter. Miss Prichett, moreover, was “supposed” to be an orphan. She did not know her “right hand from the left,” or her mother from her father, or her father from her mother in reality.

“I want to check this familiarity,” said Mrs. Fielding, recurring to Henry’s attentions to her daughter, “because it is full of risk to Helena. At present Helena laughs. But Mr. Jerningham bought her the ticket for the Ball on Monday. He is going himself to the Ball.”

“And he asked me and mamma if *we* would go, on purpose, I dare say, that we should play propriety.”

Miss Lydia sneered a little sneer, and was going on, but her mother continued, supplying Miss Lydia's meaning, which, of course, was—"while Mr. Jerningham and Miss Helena flirted."

"For which flirtation there would be abundant opportunity at a public Ball particularly."

"She shan't go," said Mr. Fielding with determination; and there was an indignant, angry puff of smoke (under the allowance of the ladies), who said they "rather liked smoke." Indeed, smoking assists conversation—for it is eloquent, and fills up awkward pauses, when the speaker says nothing, because he has nothing to say. That night something important was talked about, after everybody was gone to bed, by Mr. Fielding to Mrs. Fielding in anxiety about their daughter.

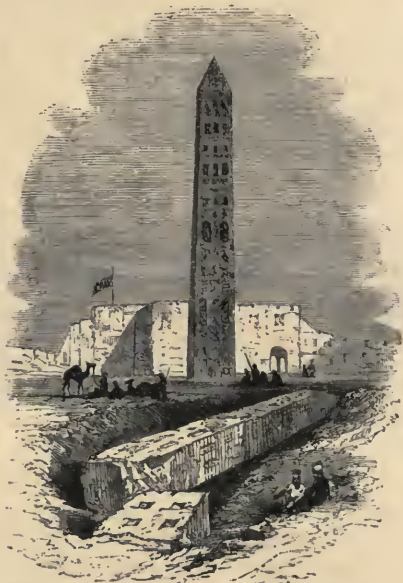
The natural surrounding for suspicions is darkness and solitude. Woman—woman! how much you have for which to answer! If the suspicions be jealous ones of that going on indoors perhaps, let the grieving one stand, lit alone by the gas-lamp, in the free air, and under the mysterious night—directing to the stars, as it were, anxious questions as to the fidelity of the fair one, bound, perhaps, by oaths. By the gaslight flickering over the street pavement shall the Suspecting One (husband or lover) torture himself—jealous perhaps, mad perhaps, as Othello. The streets are still—London streets are awfully still in some places—at twelve o'clock of the night. There is the rumble of stray wheels. Sounds of movement (vague and mournful sounding)—now distant, now closer—come a forward step. Stray approaching footsteps startle the suspicious watcher nervously into an excited, pretended saunter. The shutters, closing lazily, of the public-house, where the strong light of the gas withdraws, clank in the stillness. There will be the grit and dust in the silence, and the "mouse under the bar" for another night in that jaded public-house; in contrast to the numerous shuffling feet lately, and to the loud talk. Meantime jealousy and suspicion watch, perhaps, *their own house doors*—spy upon their bedroom windows, interpret

lights changing, guess cruel thoughts out of the shadows cast upon those relentless dropped blinds, and the flicker of closely-drawn, guarding curtains, conjured to reveal but "telling no tales." Oh, could the walls of the particular room—dwelt thus upon in agony from the outside—yield the terrible truth (or the happy reassurance) to the mistrusting watcher—he to whom likely-to-be-successful detectives seem to become the most welcome spies in the whole world! Alarm and terror follow a loved form—under supposed bad circumstances. Perhaps it is TOO LATE—perhaps, up to this, the jealous man may be *secure*. And she whom he loves to distraction may be all (or nearly all) that he would have her—and his doubts are vain, and his suspicions, wrongs, jealous wrongs, to her. This may be! But the devils who light up the Theatre (or the Arena) of the jealous man's imagination take care that the figures presented and the acted personators and circumstances shall be just the cruel ones; every surmise becoming a piercing wound, every returning suggestion of happy possible love a sting, when that dear woman is in the case.

Your own particular loved one with another! She *listening* and he *protesting*. Is not this idea such an intolerable possibility as may, *indeed*, compel you to haunt streets, to watch windows, to tear (in mind) curtains in twain, to compel street-doors to unclose like pasteboard, and rooms to render up their tales of secrets? Is not this thought of possibilities enough—if you love violently (violent love is the only love worth naming)—to force the avowal with tears, out of the slyness or the cunning reluctance of the suspected?—to accuse her as with a torrent of fire of expostulation; to wring the truth from her from the vacillation of her own half-given, half-withdrawn hand; to pluck off the black devil's mask of seeming, and to convict the renewed false vows and the thoroughly proffered reassurances—flung to your feet by her—to force these as into true flashing snakes: as the cast-down wands of the Egyptian conjurers became, when the frown and challenge of Moses and his mighty uplifted

hand "grappled" (to use a strong figure) the magic of that swarthy Pharaoh priesthood and changed their stricken rods at once as into horror, and into the crowd of asps.

"I do not like this Mr. Jerningham; I suspect him, my dear—I suspect him," said Mr. Nelson Fielding to his wife that night, when they were talking over private affairs in their own room; "and sending him away would be of no use either, now; even if he be



Mark of the magic of that "swarthy Pharaoh priesthood."

already a married man, with somebody else bound to him (and he to her), as I have grave reason to suspect. Wife—wife, he is betraying our child—poor thing! How little she suspects! Poor darling Helena! We must end this matter, my dear. We must end it at once. Tell her, to-morrow, I forbid her going to this Ball. Tell her that she must never speak to Mr. Jer-

ningham again, except in our company. Let her know that her father has discovered that Henry Jerningham is a married man. She will cry a great deal at first; *you* would have cried under such hard circumstances when you were young. But she will forget this love when she does not see Henry Jerningham. She will get the better of all of it at last. I know that the feeling of disappointed love is bitter when the dreadful truth is disclosed that *you must not love*. The mind revolts from the necessity, even while it sees it fully."

Mrs. Fielding submitted in silence to all her husband's reasons. And Helena, poor thing; poor, dear, silly girl! She little did suspect. For above-stairs (at the moment that this dialogue was going on between her father and mother, concerning her, just in the room below), Helena at that minute, or shortly after, awoke to sadness—awoke from a dream in which she saw Henry Jerningham on his knees before her, looking so like a lover, and so irresistible, pouring out his whole soul (supposed grand) at her unmoving feet. For young girls will suppose these beautiful things of ordinary men or of "images with coats"—scamped, shoddy, shabby-souled specimens of men—fit for the modern streets, or many a modern drawing-room. Ah, even only fit, sometimes, for the gambling-house, for the gaol, or—'tis possible—for the "gallows." There are those called men who are found out as wires of bones of chirping birds at last. All the fine feathers are stripped, and the fatal piece of magic, convicting lead has gone through them like paper, shot by the Great Fowler—Death. The inexpressibly great, and the inexpressibly little, are alike HIS. He disdains nothing, and respects nothing. Even Time is his, as Man conceives it. For, from first to last, time is filled with HIM.

But in Helena's dream (from which she suddenly awoke in an ecstasy of love) there knelt Henry, begging her. And she had stooped and cried; and she snatched him at last to her heart in the moment of waking. It was wholly pervading happiness she felt; although in her intensity of the sense at it, she turned pale. White and beautiful she looked, with her dark, eager, wonder-

ing eyes. As white and as gloriously beautiful she looked, as she stretched her arms over her pillow, as the very gush of virgin-moonshine showed, which poured in on her at her little back second-floor bedroom window in Great Ormond-street. All was in the profoundest stillness. There was only an occasional click of the boards. But just then the clock of the chapel in Queen's-square struck clearly "three." The chime of the Foundling Hospital, after profoundest silence, followed duly, but faintly, after a seemingly long time, and as if from a very long distance. But now, in that deepest hush, and in the perfect, and (rightly considered) in the *awful* silence—because love itself, at these times (since we then most wonder what magic it is) becomes supernatural, and therefore terrible—Helena extended her hand, as if to meet the clasp of Henry's hand. And between sleeping and waking, and as in a delicious dream, she did grasp his hand, as she thought, and clasp it as that of a Phantom—a Phantom THAT HAD COME. Perhaps as unlike the earthly, the real prosaic Henry Jerningham—known to the streets—as the classic Mercury—that godlike "Son of the Morning"—differed from the common, vulgar "tabernacled" idea of a hero (the only possible form in poor Helena's mind) who, as the man Henry Jerningham in his London guise, met her and talked to her below-stairs and ordinarily.

Thus—young women—do the gods of your fancy fall. Thus fall they from high heaven to low earth. Fallen—fallen! How often are those raised to honour and exalted to heaven in men's eyes, or pinnacled to eminence in women's love—how often, and how soon are sometimes the idols overthrown and shattered! The tumbled-down (or "come-down") solid model of the man—projected, like the Palladium, out of the classic, thundery "wilds" of the heavens—lies hot and smouldering, like the *aerolite* cooling from its fuse—to be as cold, cold marble; all the fire struck out of the man's eyes, which are opal now, and sightless. Sightless and unbrooding now, to indignation or to flashing. Thus is the precipitated image of the dishonoured god: like

Napoleon's statue overthrown from the top of the snapped *Colonne Vendôme*. Wherefore look elsewhere for a fateful, magic “moonstone” for the year 1871? Europe has the dead fallen light in that tumbled Napoleon; with the ice of the centuries on his heart, notwithstanding the celestial fire burning yet in his heart, unextinguishable as in an urn. Back from the eyes of the statue as into the urn of its stone heart let the fire retrace, and still from that great heart let the immortal fire restart into still fiercer, indignant burning, till the whole statue becomes once more aglow, and in its magic a NEW NAPOLEON avengeth forgetting France—forgetful of him who built up her great glory.

Mr. Fielding, who was a shrewd man, and one who knew the world, objected, with reason, to the close acquaintance which seemed to have been set-up between Miss Helena and Mr. Jerningham. But as usual in cases of love, opposition seemed rather to promote the tie that appeared to have sprung-up, than to diminish it. How far Mr. Jerningham had gone in his advances to Helena, or how deeply her affections had become involved, neither father nor mother could know. These results are often most fully hidden-away from those principally concerned; who are set off, in the dark, on constant false trails.

Henry Jerningham now grew more silent when he met Helena at the breakfast-table, or in the evening; for he mostly dined out, and he was absent from home pretty well all day. One evening, when he was returning, tired and worried, home, Mr. Fielding thought he caught a glance of his daughter, some distance before him, in Oxford-street, walking fast eastwards. She turned up Hanway-street, and was talking to Jerningham, who—as Mr. Fielding's momentary idea suggested—was dubious and considering; thoughtful, and seemingly dwelling on something distant in the mind. Yet the attitudes of the pair hinted great confidence. On a nearer approach, they were clearly Helena and Jerningham. Mr. Fielding's ideas were uncomfortable at the fact; which daylight and the hum of Oxford-street seemed to make more painfully distinct. He was

watching his daughter—always a very painful necessity with those we love, because it infers compromising suspicions. He lagged behind a little, as those persons before him paused, as folk do when they are hesitating. But a short while afterwards Mr. Fielding quickened his pace. And when once round in Hanway-street, and directing his impatient looks in all ways to recover the sight of those two young people, who seemed to be like—very closely like—his daughter and Jerningham, he could see only moving strangers. From this crowd of people (who did not seem people, but only unintelligent obstruction, barring his curiosity) he turned away; as we all turn away when unwelcome sights and vexatious bodies interpose between our anxiety to discover and to recognise as sure. Our hearts sink when we miss some person pursued with suspicion. And the object that, with vexation, we think escaping, impresses as near; could we but see. What an impatience of the heart we feel when we find ourselves baffled, and when unconscious strangers face us, or go before us, with an indifference natural enough—which mocks!

“I could not have been mistaken,” thought Mr. Fielding. “That young man shall go,” meaning that Mr. Jerningham should be sent away from his comfortable perch (as a proud bird) of dangerous flirtation in Great Ormond-street.

Thus time and trouble passed on. Helena's pretty dress did not make its appearance in the parlour so often—perhaps because it was being made elsewhere, very possibly by some milliner engaged specially, and to be paid with Miss Helena's money, or from some other source. But determined, in defiance of her parents, did the young lady seem to go to this forbidden Ball. Her mother argued with her continually—frowned—grew angry—begged—persuaded—offered her any bribe, and proposed other amusements. Miss Helena would always come round to her self-same point—that of wanting to go. It was evidently of no avail—none—for her mother either to argue or to leave advice alone; to frown or to smile; to be angry, or not to be angry.

It was one evening after tea. Those last hours of

the day were lovely and quiet. It was about eight o'clock, and the month, it will be remembered, was July. The ladies of the Boarding-House were either upstairs (in their own rooms), or were out; either visiting, shopping, or taking a walk. Mr. Jerningham had not been in the house since the morning. But Helena had looked at the dining-room door every time it opened. At this evening-period he usually was at home; a plain proof this was that she expected him. Who does not know what this means when it is love that inspires the watching of doors? when it is love that directs the tantalising thoughts, so often disappointed, to the opening of the particular door? But



The "Ballet" in Fairyland.

he did not come. Nobody came. Nobody seemed to be coming. There was silence for a time. Miss Helena had been somewhat talkative and giddy heretofore. And her mother, imagining that she was in a lighter, freer, and more confidential and comfortable mood than had been usual with her lately, went to the window with design, and while looking-out, seemingly casually remarked—

"That Ball, after all, is not much worth-while going to."

There was silence that was *understood*—and that seemed distance and strangership suddenly set up mutely between mother and daughter (ominous this).

Miss Helena stretched her little white hand (which somehow had shining rings upon the fingers)—whence, and how rings should come, was one of the facts that puzzled in her case, and made one uncomfortable; for the rings were evidently valuable. But Helena nervously extended her hand, over the table, to a teacup; fidgeting somewhat anxiously with it; not liking the subject of conversation, which she saw was coming to tease her.

Mrs. Fielding took courage from her daughter's not answering, though she might have construed Helena's manner as the reverse of favourable to her hopes.

"My dear, I'm glad that you don't care to go to the Ball. And I certainly don't think it proper, considering how rude Mr. Jerningham is becoming. Because he don't speak at all, now, to your father. And he is only coldly and restrainedly polite to me. I don't think it at all right that you should have any ticket or favour from him. Let him have the card back; and let somebody else go to the Ball with him with it."

"Mother," said Helena, very quietly, "did you say somebody else was to go with him—with Mr. Jerningham—to this Ball next Monday?" Her voice shook.

This was enough, *this*, that the mother had suggested. Fatal picture! The very idea (for so deep had she gone down that terrible road of destruction of love) that another young lady (who, with all their eager guesses, could tell who or how beautiful she might be?) should be taking his arm and entering that Ball-room in her place—he seeing her home, and being her cavalier—this thought was indeed wildly insupportable to Helena.

"Mother," resumed Helena, with much exterior composure, though she turned very pale, and her eyes assumed a sad, fond, plaintive, sedate expression as she averted them *from* her mother, and looked, considering, at the wall, "if you think that I vary or alter in my mind about going to this Ball, you mistake." It meant much when the poor girl said *this* Ball. Truly this Ball, and what she presumed would occur at it, were, to her, all that was of importance for the world. This was poor Helena's conquest, glory, life's reward—every-

thing. Anticipations of her happiness, this night, indeed made life only valuable. Time, clocks, had the leaden chains of the weight of the weariness and commonplace of the ages seemingly upon them, delaying the reddening, then goldenly bright, sun of the day of the welcome love. And yet the days (and the nights), so slowly, yet so surely, while there was life and health to her, were leading up to this—HEAVEN to the poor girl, knowing no better. How can men of the world, and people of the world, estimate this triviality? With poor heavens incontestably are the thoughts of many people filled. We pity the Elysium of many bright mistaken women, when it refers to some shabby specimen of men. We wish them well out of their choice, and as speedily disentangled as possible from their "fool's paradise," if such be possible.

Ah, man—man! man with money! your money, your wretched trash of cheques and coin, may (much more than the buying her beauty) buy the *real* love of even the true woman; with all those wondrous heights, and depths, and breadths, and soundless, measureless profundities of woman's possibility of love. Profanation to think so! That love (Divine Thing) shall be felt, perhaps, for a snob or a sneak, too ignoble *even to try to be a villain*. Doubtless, most unworthy man in this light! This love is a possibility for you (mean, and a coward, that you may be) to contend for; that love for which, not to speak of mortal great men or heroes, an Angel himself, radiant with insupportable arrows of beauty from the very threshold of the court-of-arms of God, might be content to forego his native starry lands, and almost to tear from his symmetries his immortal wings, which flashing pinions might bear him up again with glorious cherubic face, urging into heaven. But for woman's love, conceivable for him, he plunges even now DOWN—with face again to earth—for a new essay to that City of God to mortal man; of the glory of the chance of which Man knows nothing, but for which, perhaps, he has even angels for rivals; beckoning to woman from the dust of the earth to light, from the animals of the earth to heaven; which heaven

the Son of the Sky would fain win for her, but dare not. Because he has foregone his own heritage purposely, and been tempted where he should have shunned.

But we will now return from the unseen, and the un-supposed, to the seen and the real ; from the World of the Invisibles who watch men, to the world of the mortals who come up as from out the caverns of the earth.

“But, Helena,” said her mother, returning into the room from the window, “this is foolish.”

At this moment the Postman’s step was heard quickly



Country house where Helena Fielding spent her sixteenth and seventeenth years.

to come in at the street door. There was a sudden, startling *rap—rap*, which set the poor mother returning into the deep, old-fashioned window thinking. By-and-by the little servant who fetched and carried, willingly, constantly, and with eager good-nature, bringing out her excuses with volubility (even before she was charged with the fault); she came into the room; and as mother and daughter looked at her, she gave a mys-

terious-looking note into the hands of Helena, at which her eyes fixed, and her manner grew absorbed, although with surprise; as if she expected something more than a letter.

The poor mother's heart fell at the sight of this strange letter, which, perhaps, she was not to see. She could have cried. There was a time when the hesitating, self-absorbed girl before her (who had her private interests now, and her secrets evidently, which, with a business air, she was determined that her mother should not share) would, when she was little, when she was a laughing, blooming child, with her hair all floating back, and with clear, beautiful, wondering eyes, new in a world where all was new, quick and apprehensive in a world which seemed all of responsive beauty to her beauty, slim and trim, with loveliness and a ribbon to set it off, or a hem to charm—there was a time when this obedient daughter would have flown with delight to pour gladly into a mother's confiding heart all the world of pleasure, which seemed to be shut-in, in a letter, *written and directed* to the child herself. To herself; indeed, *to herself*. With her name as "Miss" for the first time seen—oh with such swelling pride!—written upon it; no matter whether coming from boy or girl, male or female. Now it was only a *man's* handwriting that could interest; and of all penmanship there was only the charmed and charming magical direction, in HIS hand to HER, of only *one man* on the face of the whole world that could fill her with joy. That made her afraid, and impelled her trembling fingers not so much to hasten to open as to keep firm shut; for the letter of one we love is as the casket of pearls, better kept shut than opened, on account of the rich things which lie best there securely locked, because we can fancy them, and the reality of opening will perhaps fall short. Better kept as the dream not to be dispelled, and the possession, with us, to be carried about; not to be examined, but known to be ours—our own.

What there was in this letter no one ever knew. The faces of the mother and the daughter while this letter was read by Helena would have been a picture. The

attentive, anxious, fearful, suspicious, loving look of the mother, fearing—ay, fearing almost *everything* for her daughter. Mothers (who may read these lines), you may, or may not, have felt this possibility; but you will understand what is meant. Men must write for you, if you wish to be instructed in those things nearest your interests and hearts. Women cannot thus write; they are debarred by their sex. Theirs are, after all (if they are true women), only “pincushion” contributions to literature—fiction, fiction; untrue, unreal. In our justification of our underrating woman’s writing as in any way instructive or useful as pictures of the world, we will advance a truth to which, we think, reply will be difficult, and that on the part even of the most strenuous advocates of supposed woman’s rights, or of her qualifications as the public teacher. If she be acquainted with the real positive (supposed offensive and forbidden) side of life, that which is the true secret outcome of men and women, she cannot be a woman of modesty, because it is impossible that she can have gained such knowledge, and be that unknowing, delicate thing which we would have her. If she knows not this dark, weedy—in its own, after all, glorious and grand, though, doubtless, devilish side of human life, she is a child with a pen—a parrot with a tongue, talking, however loudly, of things which she does not understand; inasmuch as we should turn away from her if we were convinced she really knew. This must be the case with modest women setting up for public teachers. In the real ways of civilised, ordinary men’s and women’s life, however clever these women may be, there ought not to be *expressed* knowledge.

Therefore, Women, *be* Women. Leave *some* of your own matters, and these the most important, and *all* matters, of course, referring to the men, to men alone who know how to deal with them; and who are by nature qualified to deal with them. But, dear women, ye poor, beautiful, angelic creatures (always so assumed), you do not know, you cannot vitally and really know, even your own affairs, mostly, because ye have not heads for profundities; and these subjects are profound.

“Whom is your letter from, Helena? I must know, because I must tell your father. If you will not yield the knowledge of whom the letter comes from—to me, your mother—you remember——”

“I *do* remember it, mother—dear mother—but I never can tell you who writes this letter. No one can know; no one shall know. Not even when I am dead shall anybody know. Oh, my mother! Notwithstanding this I go to this Ball, and with—with——”

“With Mr. Jerningham, you would say?”

“With him? Yes, with him.”

“Not if I said no, and forbade it. Not if I said you shall not.”

“Yes; no matter what you said or did. You are my dear, best, most-loved, affectionate mother; and your displeasure would half kill me. But go I must. Go I will to this Ball.”

“But you shall not go. I do not beg—I command. I, your mother, insist!”

“And I, your father,” said Mr. Fielding, as he entered abruptly, for the handle of the door had turned, and the door had half-opened while he stood silently listening; but all was unheard in the trembling excitement of the scene of the moment with the mother and daughter. “I, your father,” said Mr. Fielding, as Helena turned pale, and looked steadfastly at him—Oh, so beautiful and terrible she looked!—“I, your *father*,” he repeated for the third time, “say you *shall not* go. And Mr. Jerningham enters not this house again, though his carriage drove up to the door, and he offered you a thousand a year, and begged and entreated me to admit him as an inmate, and to be permitted to address you. Son-in-law to me he can never be; husband to you he can never be, for—foolish, mad, rebellious, wicked girl—He is married. So that ends all.”

“’Tis false! he is not married. ’Tis all false! He loves me dearly. He loves me only. Never has he loved any other. Oh, no—no!” sobbed Helena convulsively, with her face buried in her hands, and her hair drooping in golden, flowing curls on the table, which trembled in her weeping.

Through her small white fingers her bitter—bitter tears were falling fast; falling as if each drop were an enforcement to you (penetrated with startling pity; tearful also) to run to her, to take her in your arms; and, kissing as another Henry, to reassure her, like a child whom you longed to appease, yourself laughing all the time between trouble and pleasure at *her* trouble, at the pleasure of the hope of making her again smile, to appease her with a restored toy, like a child; giving her, indeed, Henry, if she wanted him.

“You go not, my child, with this man to this terrible Ball. He is married, I tell you. He is intent on your ruin. Your father shall stand in the gap and withstand him. Your mother shall prevent. But promise us, my darling Helena, that you will not go to this Dance, and that you will spurn this perjured, vain, unprincipled villain; who to his demon of feeble, of accursed vanity, would offer up—you, you, Helena! *You*, my daughter; *you* whom Heaven gave me, and whom I almost, like Virginius, could see, could wish——”

“Stop, Fielding, stop,” said the mother. “You were going to say something dreadful. I saw it coming by your eyes. Helena will consent. Dear Helena, let your mother come to *you*, if you will not come to her. And kiss me, and tell me you will do as we wish—like a dear girl.”

And the poor woman crept close to her daughter, and at last she kissed her (Helena did not resist). And Helena laid her pale, heart-touching, beautiful, and yet determined—though in one way melting—face to her mother’s. Taking her child in her arms, as if to shelter her alike from the thunder, perhaps, of dangerous Heaven, or from the deadly terrors of the betraying earth, as only a mother can, stretching wide to clasp a daughter, Mrs. Fielding drew her child to her. Great nobility came into the rough, commonplace face of her father, as he stood silently regarding—borne above, as we may figure it, upon the top of the waves of his father’s aroused feelings, like as in a sailor’s struggle, seeking rescue. Both the wife, with her fixed look of love, and the unmoving, resolute eyes of the daughter—out of

which, too, occasionally a dart of fire would come, like slower and slower, and yet forceful flashes out of the floods of the retiring rain-storm—clearing away not for softness but for steely retiring hardness—both his wife and his daughter fixed Mr. Fielding's gaze.

"He would see me dead rather than with—than with—HIM," at last Helena could say, with a throb to which her heart sprang as if it would burst. "Then he must see me so, mother—he must. For at that Ball I must be present: and see what he does—what Henry—what Mr. Jerningham—does, if (which is not supposable) he should refuse to take me. And I would even go to the Ball, if in his place—ay, in his place——" Helena gasped, for she was suffering terribly, like a lovely, splendid rose, whose leaves are torn and rent in the fierce assault of a wrenching wind, when the storm-blast comes down into the garden, and when the floods of the threshing hail pour down, making one's heart bleed even at the wild extremity of a poor rose, exposed thus cruelly to winds, flinging off, like devils, its lovely investiture of petals one by one, whilst we stand by distressed, but sheltered and safe. Who could, tearless, untouched, contemplate without pity the mischief—the rifling outrage, even—of the beauties of one single unrescued rose—doomed, doomed?

"Ay, whom to choose in his place would you go with, if he should himself decline, or be prevented from taking you to this detestable Ball? Do you mean me or your father?"

"You or my father?" said Helena with bewildered—even with childish, positively scornful—astonishment, as if the idea, coupled with her other ideas, was the most preposterous in the world. A sadly terrific, because so determined, smile succeeded on her lips.

"Who is it, then?" said her father with fear. "Some stranger—some person—some man whom I have not seen?"

"Some man!" echoed Helena. "Hear me, father: if these were the last words that ever I spoke, if this were my last assurance on earth, and if the alternative were that"—and Helena pointed, like Destiny or like a

classic genius, to the half-open door, through which the staircase was seen, like something for "Fate" to pass up by. "If the other means could not be, and if I could not go to the Ball attended there alone by *Him*, whom you know; and love him there, as I must love him always, and for ever—father, mother, earth, heaven, that dreadful place where the devil is, all else being nothing—nothing whatever to me in comparison——"

"What, my child, would you say? You are excited and hysterical. Think what you are saying."

"Why, I would say," whispered Helena in a dreadful, because in a calm, tone, quietly and with a smile—a wonderful smile of intensity and of placidity combined—"that there, down those stairs, should be carried slowly, blackly muffled, that—that—*hiding* your child." Helena shuddered. "Ah! pale indeed, because dead—that coffin which the men received and carried, locking up for the slow, sad ride to that silent, undisturbed place where neither balls, nor fathers, nor mothers, nor sights of any kind, or sounds (as understood humanly) are known. But still, where such as *He* shall live, and be seen, even through the phantom eyes itself of ghostly Death. And it is *there* that I will see him, if I go not with him to this—ay, this absurd Ball, as you know it is; and as I know it is. But for *Him* whom I love beyond my own soul—with him and for him will I go!"

"My dear Helena," the mother interposed, tearfully overcome, and even frightened for the first time in her life by the earnestness of her daughter, "you do not know what you say. You are ill and nervous. Your father, and I, and you will talk of this again, by-and-by—some other time."

"No, now is the time to *settle* it—at once and for all. So fixed and determined am I to go to this Ball (which is all I live for, or want to live for), that if I am debarred from going with—— I cannot say his name, but you know whom I mean, spite of my attempts to speak those thoughts which nearly choke me. If I cannot go with *HIM*, who is this light, and this heaven and this earth—more than even you, dear parents, fifty-fold over—why I will accept the escort of the Great Devil Him-

self, be He real, or be he Nothing—be He myth or mistake, or be he real or that Thing that can assume the Form of Man. Hear me, then, thou GREAT PRINCE, if thou canst hear! And I will place my hand in His, and he shall clasp mine. And so long as he can attend



“I will follow HIM to his place.”

me to that place, and show me HENRY there on that night, why I will follow him to HIS PLACE, and redeem my word, and be HIS (even in his own red house of fire), after I have been in the Human Other's (you know whom I mean)—in his company, and after having been seeing him and talking to him really, and been by his side. Loving him, and believing that *he loves me*,

is enough. But for that one little night, or for one hour of that night of blessedest—blessedest because loving, deliriously joyful, embracing exchange of hands and kiss—will I do this! So let this great Devil come, of whom, and so vainly, we have heard so much. And if he hears me, here is (and if he has ears and understanding he *can* hear me) even your daughter Helena, if he will hold to his word, who will accept his side. And then let me so redeem, that he Himself hand me back from this awful Ball, unheard of, because it has then the Devil for a Dancer.” Helena laughed *such* a wild, mischievous, almost delirious, dangerous laugh at this. “So go I will, and shall, to this Ball. And if Henry cannot see me there, and cannot attend me as my cavalier, why Satan shall. Further, of his gifts, and out of his power, perhaps, he will concede me success to this idolatrous love (I grant wicked) of Henry, and permit me the dear mad delight of hearing him vow devotion to me (and to me alone), of all women in the whole world. And this, doubtless, will HE do, if I in requital, after that instant’s assured joy, as I now vow I will, perform *my* part of the bond; redeeming the pledge in going whither and at what moment with him that he chooseth—wherever to, and whenever he shall please!”

All this was wild—was “mad and bad;” because Helena was untrue and disingenuous—was all the time, of course, as everybody will insist (nay knows), calling upon mere nothing and upon Names—that are only names. The Devil, as you and I, friend, sagacious reader, know very well, cannot be seen, being nothing personal, but only the “badness itself of the human heart.” Mere vapour, talk, and stupid parsons’ abstraction; like abstract time, or abstract space, or abstract anything, moral moonshine—that is, merely thought. No one, we think, believes that the Devil can ever make himself bodily or personally visible—something to see and to talk-to. So Helena was quite safe, and she knew she was safe—and her rhetoric was only a vaunt. Though, silly child, through her tears and her passion, she meant it in a way seriously at the time. And she

fell asleep like a child with a toy in her arms, when she went to bed after her fit of crying and of love (vanities both); nor did her adjuration, nor any circumstances about the Devil, to alarm, follow her tears into her dreams or into that wild, untrodden country of sleep.

But poor Mr. Fielding and his wife, being simple and credulous—or rather, non-relying, non-certain people, not knowing what to believe—were aghast. For in some houses, and under certain circumstances, the very name of the Devil can alarm and disquiet. Though methodical, commonplace, and disbelieving of nought—but “A B C,” and “L. S. D.”—are we English. We believe golden sovereigns, but we cannot believe anything else; of all things a real, personal Devil last can we believe.

The sky, which had been beautifully clear in the early part of the evening, and the sun, which had been very bright, gloomed while the father, the mother, and the daughter were thus excitedly talking. There came a sort of fiery, copper lustre from the west as the sun was descending. Then it gradually intensified in a peculiar manner, and a circled darkness in the sky, which meant a grand arch of dark clouds, came; and a sudden fall of rain, false, almost, in its oncome, wonderfully prismatic and picture-like—brilliant and yet Saturnian—dismal and yet delicious, came. At last the bright gold glowed with the sun. Presently again all was dark-red gold—red-ochrey gold, rich and arrowy, and flashing. This effect showed when the “Ball” deepened—or rather heightened—as the topic of conversation. But at the last part of Helena’s forcible—and impassioned, and therefore even eloquent—appeal to the Mighty Devil to show himself—she all the time knew better—but she, like most women, was naturally a most excellent actress; pretending, and all the time (to what she said) meaning differently—at the close of her wild, heedless speech adjuring his Sinister Mightiness to come up to her call from his realms, or to voyage hither from those distant, unknown places where, doubtless, he had his business:—when, we say, she demanded of him thus to “see her safe” to the Ball, if she were dis-

appointed of the attendance of Henry—why (reader), at this last part of the talk, there was a long, low rumble of romantically-sounding, unmistakable, chance thunder. It seemed to come from a thousand miles off in a moment. From some far-place it appeared to sweep—from the recesses, perhaps, of the Hartz Mountains, brought nearer for the occasion; or from somewhere as dreadful. The unexpected thunder rolled and gave itself voice (not loudly), until there was a low, tilting boom, which seemed to dive into silence in Guildford-street—diminishing underground. The thunder took, seemingly, a sly, slanting direction, and traced its way deep down, like earthquake, under the house in Great Ormond-street, wherein there was a shiver of the walls, and a slight jingle of the glasses on the sideboard; and outside a low growl of thunder there was, even after the long roll had set itself, wholly and completely, to hushed magic sleep. All these spirit-like noises went away at last into the depths of the “far-away,” or into whatever by-way into the vast invisible they chose—whatever mysterious, enchanted region of the “Prince of the Powers of the Air,” the thunder, or the other vocal *meteora*, betake; as into their home.

Nobody, however, observed these sensible effects. For the people in the house in Great Ormond-street were too much occupied with their own affairs—great or little—to regard them. But are we the judges—in this “great world of small things,” or “small world of great things”—of the little and the large, or of their connection? We think not. So there might have been something supernatural in the thunder, and in the jar of the house—however accidental these small atmospheric occurrences may seem, and however trivial. For really we know nothing of what there is outside of us. Nor can we understand how (or why) we may be spied-upon by invisible spirits, who, in their own way, intelligently act in our affairs—we all the time thinking we do all the things that we do.

Some days passed. They were days of suspicious, uncomfortable looks on the part of Mr. Fielding and of his wife, at their daughter, as Helena sat placid (though

not refusing to talk), amidst the group at the breakfast-table. There was a sort of reserved air among the boarders; altogether the same genial flow of conversation which had prevailed before the departure of Mr. Jerningham (for he was gone) did not exist. There was continual eating and drinking. For when, in a boarding-house, was there ever a time when there was not eating and drinking—when there was a chance?—the inmates always taking good care to have their full money’s worth for their weekly pay. The tea, and the bread-and-butter, and the ham disappeared. Even those with no appetite, and the sickly and the affected (the foolish most), found appetite (and smiles) when the rolls and the fresh butter came to table. Such is life; it is all “rolls and butter,” mingled with a few tumbles of the rolls in the taking them.

The life of the Boarding-House was that of ten thousand other houses and households. It was all the “grazing on the common” of the ordinary commonplace London day. The little shabby maid put her head in and out of the breakfast-room. A musical-box (shown by one of the gentlemen boarders in the evening) was an event and a treat. The restless little servant-girl, slipshod as she was, who was as a whole retinue of servants to the Boarding-House, continually rattled the loose handle of the parlour door in her infantine nervousness, and jerked her good-humoured busy head in like a china image. Miss Prichett, the young old-maid, and the fashionable lady (with aristocratic connections—who they were, nobody knew), this star of the Boarding-House was always scrupulously well-dressed in her morning strait-laced toilette. She said, “Of all things in the world she hated low ways,” and therefore her dress came very high in the neck; consequently, the poor little servant came in for much ironical and under-rating remark. Miss Prichett would read with important, pensive interest the damp, leaden-coloured, “tea-paper,” squeezed noisy columns of the “Daily Telegraph.” The sensation leaders of this Bartholomew Fair Giant of the daily press, some of which sensation leaders were magnificent and clattering, like old suits

of armour out of the Wardour-street miscellaneous depositories, trimmed up for sale, accidentally, by some modern Isaac of York, able to buy up all the Templars (at least, the "briefless" among them) with red *piqué* wads and quillings from "Sewell and Cross's" close by, as first thought-of; these romantic political essays, and the usual "Telegraph" string of small sensation advertisements—paying-stiffening to set off the "political London Journal"—all this was Miss Prichett's amusement, wonder, and great edification and education. This was newspaper-buying cheap at a "penny a day;" with another "penny a day" for a bun for her sedate-lunch at the pastrycook's in Oxford-street, with half a glass of cold water, a sipper into it from the confectioner girl and a glance at the clouded-looking glass which reflected back the "daylight Miss Prichett," on which glass a few inattentive, hazy flies ordinarily ruminated; the latter circumstances "turning up," were usual in the day's lady's rambles.

It happened that on the very next day after the foregoing occurrences, Mr. Fielding received a letter from Henry Jerningham. This letter was evidently satisfactory to Mr. Fielding; which effect was proven by the fact that, after having read it with attention, his brow cleared. His lips relaxed from their—up to this—determined expression, and Mr. Fielding felt some ease of mind. When he had read the letter almost twice over, he asked his wife to retire for some talk with him. He was clearly bent on telling her something—and that a particular something; and some cheerful news. As they passed Helena, who was seated on one side of the table, and who watched them with silent anxiety, they gave her a significant look, which almost seemed involuntary. It was observed by her, however, with a dreading face, and she trembled; but the next moment she felt more than ever resolved. Her excitement was natural, and her face was flushed.

Henry Jerningham had removed to lodgings not far from Great Ormond-street when he was sent "about his business," as it is called; as Mr. Fielding's disapproval of him was pronounced and positive. Henry

explained his case and his feelings in his letter in excellent terms. In the end he contrived to please him, and to remove Mr. Fielding's prejudices. He was very candid. But he effectually disposed of the suspicions that he was married. And this was the great ground of opposition to him; and a very natural one and fatal, of course.

As the result of all this, a reconciliation was finally effected between Helena's father and mother and Jer-ningham. He took up his abode again (a wrong step) in Great Ormond-street; and all went on again much as before. He solemnly promised, and he gave every assurance that he was sincere (for he *was* sincere—and sincerity always tells on our face its own tale), that he would forego all special marked attention to Helena, and that, in thinking of it, he would be guided entirely by the wishes of Helena's father and mother in regard to this portentous Ball, which was to come off on the ensuing Monday. As to future movements in his love, he left these open to possible approval; but he spoke well, and naturally.

Thus some days passed on. The evening of the Ball arrived. It was Monday—the very choice of Monday as the day spoke the miscellaneous, inferior character of the Ball. It was a sort of Benefit Public Ball. A Dance was promised with a first-rate orchestra, and other tentative Ball-like appliances—as usually presupposed of a not very distinguished (but popular) class. The Ball was even to be given at aristocratic rooms, though now they were somewhat faded and fallen from their original high and palmy state. Notwithstanding this fashionable dusk, they yet presented reminders of dignity aforetime. There was the old-fashioned “Royal Box,” in which, in remote days, sat—it is recorded in the newspapers—King George the Third and Queen Charlotte, and the ladies-in-waiting and royal attendants—comprising ladies and gentlemen starred, laced, and feathered. Thus “stars and garters” and princesses—beauty, dignity, and fashion—had been present here in these rooms long ago. Over all this fashion the waves of Time have rolled.

Gone—gone is all this. Innumerable trains of living shadows have since added to that unending picturesque procession—a London one—which was “real flesh and blood” at one time, and which has passed adown that Great Slope to “dusty death.” And to murmurs of carriage-wheels—such stately (*flambeaux*-lighted) carriages they were—and to the measured *beat, beat,* and *jolt, jolt,* of the sedan-chairs along the street; and to the muffled, soft tread of the tall, great-coated-and-caped chairmen, all heels as they seemed when they trotted fast, carrying duchesses in diamonds and *beaux* in bags, marched on the generations from George the First to George the Fourth—from youth to age. Until the old, West-End days, in the metropolis, changed into the now hurrying days—these days when old age itself seems obsolete; mad, foolish, and bad, and out of place, as fit to be pushed rudely to the kerbstone by audacious, unthinking, modern youth—fed with “telegrams,” “last sensations,” and loose life. Such is life! The wave that mounts, only mounts the more surely to glide into the gulf. Not even the *shadows* now know all those troops of past people who have faded into them. Such is life! Like a ship, with its mimic pasteboard waves, surmounting as the top to an old-fashioned clock, to which come fairy little rushes of melancholy music after the chimes chink—old tunes to which our fathers and mothers listened at the same hearth, perchance, as we. All are gone but their memories! Our early days and all their sunshine are gone—gone.

“How long, O Lord, how long!” Emptiness pursues us—unrest, pain, “envy, hatred, and malice and all uncharitableness.” Are not even our very accomplished, keen purposes, at the moment that they are secure, in triumph, in our hands, useless to please? Is not the long-anticipated, longed-for delight, when fairly in our possession, disappointing; an arrow to our minds? Does not the round which we are to run, when run, seem blank and cheerless? And our supposed joys and pleasures are vain and valueless; exhausted just when we are entering upon their enjoyment—useless as “last year’s clouds?” Hopeless to soothe or to

enliven, or to invite our desire that they should be often repeated.

We do not intend to treat the reader to much cold, moralising, or depressing sentiment. Nor is our story one of fashionable life—entailing considerable denouncing enlargement upon the vanities. This preaching does no one good; and is deterrent from activity in the world—the real world.

There was very little of grandeur, or of much superior appearance to it—as it is called—in the life at home led by poor struggling Helena. She was a wonderful girl—excessively sharp and clever naturally—of a bright sort of half-education—gifted in many ways—and endowed plenteously with (truly) that frequently most fatal gift for woman—beauty. This last tremendous (in its effects) endowment of beauty, can—as they say—pull down princes from their thrones, and draw saints—almost, only, we will charitably add—from the cloister. Beauty has peril even for the deepest-sworn vows. These, in the fire of temptation, sunder like rotten gold, if there could be such; part, sometimes, like threads that crumble into tinder—curling up in the heat into little smokes and into disappearance. Dear reader, fly the first approaches of temptation. Rush away as you would escape triple, triple demolition—death from adders, poison, or sword. Believe an old, experienced Sly One—very *mellow* and yellow (not with gold) in the ways and wiles of the world—who (to his cost) has seen much; and who (again to his cost) knows more. There is *no* arguing with, or getting the better of, temptation. Running away is the only chance for safety. Your back is the best thing to show for conquest of *this* enemy. Face every other risk. But from Temptation turn you round, and away instantly!—not inclining your head that way, or hesitating a *single moment* about it, or you are lost. In some grave cases, perhaps, you are lost, body and soul; and this would be a great damage—if you are a good article. Don't permit that you should be thrown away. Even commercially speaking, make a hard bargain with the Devil.

There was really great distance preserved between

Helena and Henry. Although they lived in the same house, they did not frequently meet. Henry was out all day, studious, apparently, to keep aloof, out of respect to his promises. Helena was silent and looked another way when she met Henry. She expected him to speak first. She hardly looked at him. She felt infinitely less in love with him when—strange to say—in his actual presence, and when he was there to talk—if *he chose*.

She thought much more of him (a natural case) when she was alone, or when he was out of sight and distant; and when his return—or his return *at all*—was uncertain.

The day upon which this expected Ball was to take place had arrived at last. It was a lovely day, sunshiny, most like a real July day. Helena somehow felt confident that she was to be that night at that Ball. And though (apparently) Henry had given up his intention—certainly to take her to the Ball, almost not less surely even to go himself—still she expected and relied—hoping against hope, against all likelihood, against all reason—that Henry would contrive the taking her to the Ball somehow; and that he would take her there eagerly, and be with her, and tell her all his purposes and designs, and pour out his love at the Ball—of course, repeating all his protestations and vows with tenfold, infinite devotion—to her delight (even in her secret idea). Her father was absent. The house seemed abandoned by everybody. Her mother had gone to a distance to visit a friend who was ill. All had seemingly forgotten this Ball, and that that was the night of it. So Helena was free to her own resolves and determination.

Thus, in her own room, Miss Helena dressed herself most slowly and carefully. And most beautiful for this Ball she looked, as she thought. When she had completed her toilet, she determined (for she had sixteen shillings of her own in her workbox, and a sovereign, too, which she had saved from her little earnings in her purse) to buy new, very small, pretty boots, in which to go to this Dance. For she had seen such a

lovely, such a beautiful pair of boots—which seemed all-in-all of fascination to her—at a ladies' boot and shoe maker's in Lamb's Conduit-street. These charming boots would have looked fairy-like and ravishing (such as Hebe would have worn, had boots been the fashion in Elysium) on the symmetrical feet of the very star of the *corps de ballet* at Her Majesty's Opera, or the pet of the ballet at any one of the most elegant burlesque or ballet theatres. These boots had long been in Helena's eyes. And she determined now to have them. So she slipped out of the house, taking the key of the street-door with her, which she was sometimes allowed. She was returning home in secret triumph with the boots in a parcel, when, to her astonishment, and almost, be it said, as a surprising circumstance (contradictory as love—that deep love—is said to be), almost to her displeasure and *dismay*, although he was the very one who filled her thoughts, she saw Henry Jerningham. He was coming across the road to meet her, and to speak to her. Helena was agitated; was so overcome with all sorts of thoughts, that although Henry, when she looked at him, seemed quite a new man—so inexpressibly and unexpectedly handsome, tender, graceful, and intense and winning—so altogether exalted, and poetised, and *spiritised*, and transfigured from what he usually was, that she was going to pass him by as a stranger. But he took her hand and he stopped her; and they turned and walked side by side together. But insensibly *away* they went from Helena's home; although she was not aware of it, for she saw nothing and thought nothing, in this new surprise of meeting Henry; looking so strange.

Henry and Helena were sometime walking together and talking. She soon recovered herself, and was prevailed upon, though not easily, to take Henry's arm, to escape observation; for the people looked back, as they invariably do when they recognise lovers: when they notice them in their deep, absorbed talk they have a feeling of envy, perhaps. Love is a thing to hide. This celestial flower is no flower to blow in the real coarse world. It is stared at there. Let it back and be sunned in its

own secret garden of delight and of solitude. The place for love is all romance, all dreaming, and intoxication; or the madness of pleasure, with all the doors of the world locked. What has the world with Love, except for its martyrdom? Eden alone is for the "Pair"—the Two alone, looking into each other's eyes for that glorious light of love between the sharp darts of the rays of which that flower, that Rose, "Love," shall bloom and penetrate; and perhaps fall into ruins and perish.

Henry, in short, was successful in his endeavour to induce Helena to go direct to the Ball with him (as she was already dressed for it); and she could so easily complete her toilette there, and put on the boots in her hand, and take all the time she pleased to render herself as fascinating as she liked, in the Ladies' Room at the H—— S—— Assembly that night. Jer-ningham prevailed. Everything was done so naturally, and said so unconsciously; so precisely did circumstances fall, as the right graceful things that ought to be done. It was all respect and tenderness on his side. So a cab was called, a "four-wheeler," of course. Henry was about handing Helena in, when, in a moment of perplexity and absence of mind, Helena drew out her purse, as if to see whether she had money of her own to answer exigencies. And on opening it, for the purse had several halfcrowns mixed with smaller silver in it, out, as if in the very conscious momentary resolve of magic mischief itself, seemed to edge-out a large SILVER PIECE coming from nowhere—queer, dark, and old. And over it toppled, and down it slipped, and along it rolled and frolicked, as if purposely, to the feet of HENRY; in wonderful homage and acknowledgment it came, absurdly so to say. Henry started back, and groaned between his clenched teeth as if he had received a shot in the foot; and he refused to see the coin.

"What is the matter?" asked Helena.

"Nothing, my darling. Pick up that silver piece? No; offer it not of all horrors to me! It is a queer, mad, bad old coin. It has got among your change in mistake; perhaps in buying your boots. No matter;

we will count your change in the cab; and this is perhaps a—a——”

Henry was going to say a “Godsend,” but the words seemed to choke him as he spoke, and to constrict his throat. He experienced a sudden paroxysm, for he could not get the expression out; and he stammered, and he looked convicted of something, as it were, as he went on—

“It is, perhaps,” said he, “a——” And “a wind-fall” was the word, instead of “GODSEND,” which he substituted eagerly.

They drove westward in the cab, for the purpose of going to the Ball. They arrived at the doors at which the company was going in. There was a great crowd, and a considerable “setting down” of cabs. All the atmosphere of the West-End was deepening into the lustrous beauties of the on-coming July twilight. The sun was long down; but a bright warm expression of the streets seemed to come, in the mellow, softening shade, from the west, across H—— square. Helena disappeared amidst the complexities of the Ladies’ Dressing Rooms. There she changed her boots, and she disrobed herself of her exterior cover. And presently she came forth and joined Henry, who had been waiting for her on the stairs full-dressed. No young girl ever looked more charming or glad, or more seductively attractive, than did Helena that night. She slipped her round, white, slender arm into Henry’s with a fond, familiar reliance and sly grace which was beautiful to see. Her little white gloves, and small (you may be sure, very small) display of shining jewellery, might have won any heart, if attention had been paid to her beauties. A Duke, if he had been there (which he was not), might have longed to load her with swathes of diamonds. These, as lacings and fetters to impede the flight back to heaven of a Hebe, whom no chains of gold, of whatever weight or unmatched metallic purity, would have been either adequate or worthy to secure. Henry himself, some time before, when his loose, handsome overcoat was removed (his hat he carried upstairs), was found to be faultlessly

attired, like a gentleman, in full evening dress. As they met, and as they ascended the stairs together, Henry looked to Helena so different, and yet the same, that he seemed (all this was the work of her brilliantly constructive imagination) to have grown somehow as a prince or a hero—a figure like a picture that she had read-of in romances, dreamed about, mused-upon, seen—if not on the stage, yet a figure that was perhaps possible upon an *ideal* stage, or in romantic, magical story, if not in real life. This was (to her), in fact, Henry Jerningham in a state of grand, magic dream's exaltation, with apparently (at least to her fancying eyes), the bloom of immortal youth and of the centuries of romance upon him. And he talked in *such* a way! Such a way, with such eyes as were wonderful, with such eloquence, such picture-painting, such charms, that she felt giddy every now and then with excitement, with wonder, with depths of intense gratitude that she, of all women, should be selected as for partiality WITH HIM; with dreams of all sorts of possible and impossible things. Intermixed with this tumult of feelings—for she felt that she was growing wonderfully, dangerously fascinated with this creature—was great fear, even *terror* growing, that made her pale. Everybody (to speak the fact) looked back at HIM as they passed, rather than at her, though she looked beautiful truly, as if they were drawn by some magic, admiring sympathy to look at him with suspicion (to express a latent, curious feeling) as an *impossible* man—a man never to forget, whose eyes were temptations, for whom the music seemed to play as a wizard-welcome, and round whom it seemed with languishing, clinging beauty to wheel, and upon whom to linger. Who is this that had come like a Terrible Thing among the throng, like a picture, or an image, or a shadow, with immortal, magic bloom upon his cheeks (conjured-up by the force of the hot imagination), out of the universal Romance of the Centuries? This seemed the effect. Stranger the man seemed, and yet so easy he was *where* he was. A mystic, spiritual detector would have fixed the supposed Henry Jerningham (here) as coming from out the deep mysteries

of magic, from unnamed dazzling holds, from out of men’s distrusts of the possible, rather than from their thoughts of the real—from woman’s teeming fancies, from the heaven of heavens itself, perhaps, or from out the Kingdom of the Supernatural—or from, to put it coolly, another dreadful direction—NAMELESS. That is, from out of the Fires of Hades.

Thus passed the early part of the evening. As it was a Public Ball there were very few introductions. Strangely enough (as Helena thought) Henry seemed



“The home or hold probably from which that Terrible Thing in the likeness of man came to tempt Helena.”

to know no one, although he had declared that several of his friends were likely to be at the Ball, to some of whom he intended to introduce Helena, which declaration of his complimentary intention had fluttered her no little in her continual thoughts (before) of the Ball. Because some of the names of those whom Henry mentioned were names, as spoken by him, familiar to her,

or were those of whom she had heard as eminent in one walk or other of public life. Some also of those likely to be present at this Ball, as he said, were members of his own family; a point of personal knowledge very interesting to Helena to clear up.

Henry Jerningham, when they had been some little time walking backwards and forwards in the Ball-room, danced the first dance which fell into its order after they had entered. It was a quadrille. The room (now) wore a crowded aspect. There was much bustle, and the buzz of conversation prevailed. The music was beautiful—very beautiful to Helena, who thought that she had never heard such a charming orchestra. Every time that Henry's hand touched hers in the quadrille Helena's heart thrilled. Sometimes, indeed—proud as Helena felt of having (in her idea, and evidently according also to the impressions of those who observed him) such a noble-looking lover, so handsome, so graceful, so everything—she could not bear the deep, the wonderful—nay, the insupportable—glance of his penetrating, steady, cool eye; full of a thousand histories, all beautiful, all grand, all strange. Her sensations were indescribable. She felt as if she were having some surpassing honour done her. And she was beginning to look (now) pale, anxious, fascinated with fear, and overpowered.

One more dance did Henry dance with Helena. It was a waltz—a bewitching wild waltz—prolonged. Helena became very tired and pale after this waltz. Henry was as cool, self-possessed, and as unimpassive and surveying as when he began. After this waltz, much to her surprise, considerably soon to her vexation, she was left alone to her solitude in the corner, as if she were one (perhaps it was because she was seen dancing with Henry), although she was so very attractive, one of whom all the dancers seemed afraid. But she was (now) wholly disinclined to dance again, and looked forlorn and wretched. The joy to her of the room seemed departed. Henry had disappeared; he had retired now for a long time—Helena could not tell where. She strained her eyes to look for him, feeling intensely

jealous. And by-and-by she was alarmed at his protracted absence.

Time elapsed, during which Helena sought to beguile her mortification by looking on, pertinaciously, at the dancers. She was beginning to think that this was becoming a very, very uncomfortable—nay, wretched—evening for her. Disappointment, despair deepened. Keen disappointment beset her—lassitude—anxiety. The music became painful and wearisome. It oppressed. She was looking round and round at the crowd, watching the doors in the vain hope of seeing Henry's much-desired face again. What could this absence, this neglect of his, mean? What could have induced it? Henry still kept away. Perhaps it was design. Perhaps he had other objects, even here, than attending her. Helena's heart began to throb with terrible alarm; it sank soon with a sick anxiety. She now felt even ill—a sort of hysterical tremor came coldly over her. She wished she could rise and change her place. But she could not move. There was a crowd of all sorts; there were careless people before her, and the buzz and hum, and the incessant talk, and the recurrent whirl of the waltz, and that eternal playing on of the band in the powerful, intense light, shining down as if from a contracted, descending sky, with many persevering suns—all these sights and sounds so seemed to afflict and task her endurance that she could scarcely hold-out, or resist fainting away.

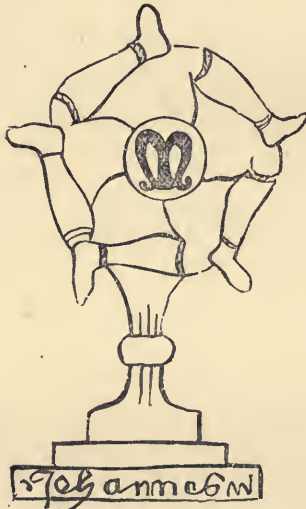
At length she once more caught sight of Henry; sauntering even composedly and indifferently towards her, looking the same—the people, indeed, made way and parted instinctively from before him; but he was *so* changed. He had no eye FOR HER. He was like a *stranger*. And she was like one *who had done wrong*; with a feeling as if she had a heavy stone in her bosom for a heart, and she was sick with apprehension. The full measure of her indiscretion and folly now became apparent to Helena. Strange mysterious fears—terrible, uncertain—came crowding upon her. She feared she knew not what. She felt almost too awed to tremble; she seemed somehow shadowed with doom.

Henry's excuses for his absence, and for his (now) evident indifference were frivolous; and were at once rejected by Helena as untrue, and not the real reasons for his avoidance of her during the latter part of the Ball. She now felt perfectly alone and compromised in a place where the music seemed a mockery. She could not smile. She felt herself turning very pale. Cold, bitter disappointment was creeping round and round about her heart. What dreadful feelings were these for a woman who loved, and who saw that horrid, immeasurable deep gulf of *separation* widening between herself and the object who had been all the world to her! All the world past, present, and to come to her. Now gone—past—lost for love.

After a few faint, heartless compliments, which faded off, as it were, from his drooping, pretending lip—careless, wearied, reluctant—Henry, as if in answer to poor Helena's fixed, astonished, reproachful, even weeping gaze, invited her to descend to the supper-room. But offended by his shameful neglect, and casting about her anxious looks only with one desire now, which was to be away from this horrid place and to be in the open, free air, and to be *going home*—anyhow; by any means; however accompanied—with him or without him;—Helena said that she must go. And she gathered up her drooping bouquet into her dress, and she drew the latter together mechanically about her, as if she hardly knew what she was doing. Henry took her promptly at her word, and accompanied her downstairs without saying anything. There was perfect estrangement and silence now between them, for no visible cause whatever, seemingly.

So little was said between the pair on their way to Great Ormond-street, that it seemed almost (as they walked) as if they were perfect strangers. Casual remarks only were interchanged. And Helena's answers were forced and displeased. She had refused a cab—a late clattering one which they overtook—and which Henry was vainly endeavouring to induce Helena to enter. For she was evidently not only wearied and in pain mentally, but her boot (it was a very small and

beautiful boot) hurt her much as she languidly walked or crept in great pain along, from the lace being pulled too tight across the instep. They were just turning-out of Russell-square, and they were walking eastwards into Southampton-Row, when Helena's sufferings became intolerable. Tears sprang abundantly into her eyes, and ran down her cheeks. And she paused in her walk, and placing her foot upon a doorstep, as if to ease the pain even for a moment, she looked-up with her pale,



"The mysterious 'Name' engraved in the centre of the emerald boss in the silver haft of the glaive presented to Helena."

plaintive, patient, appealing face into the sky; seeking help in heaven—up there, silent and inexpressibly mournful as it looked, lightening into dawn, in the quiet. The shadows of night were retiring; like as in the "magic lantern of nature" the changes came. And the dawn crept up religiously before them; slowly—vaguely—widely—solemnly.

For once in the silent unloving walk Henry stopped, and he abruptly now asked, "Had you not, once, an

aunt named Rosa Fielding, who was a pretty ballet-dancer at Covent Garden Theatre, or at Drury Lane Theatre?"

Helena paused, and looked at him. "She belonged to Her Majesty's Theatre," answered Helena coldly, but with mute, displeased surprise that succeeded; "she escaped wonderfully out of the burning of Covent Garden Theatre, in 1856, by the help of a friend. She is now living, and I see her frequently. What was your reason for inquiring after her? Or, how came you to know her?"

"Nothing," was the laconic answer made by Henry, as he walked on silently after this. "Perhaps I was in the fire. Perhaps I was an 'Old Man' noticed there."

Some time after, seeing her still pained and uncertain as she walked, Henry stepped up kindly to Helena's side, took her hand, and said with tones of feeling, "Miss Fielding." How that unaccustomed word "Miss," *from HIM*, came strangely and dreadfully upon her ear, instead of her own familiar christian name "Helena," ejaculated as it had so often been with the warmth of love; ardent, glowing; now, ah, not as heretofore! She had loved—loved, *loved*—that word *FROM HIM*.

"Allow me," said Henry gallantly, "to cut this lace. I see it is hurting you fearfully. I will give you relief." As he spoke he stooped; and he drew from his pocket something that shone with a curve of silvery-dangerous light, like a small glaive or dagger. In an instant the lace was severed; and the clinging of the boot relaxed, letting escape that sharp pain from off it, and affording delicious ease. At this Helena drew a relieved breath, looking even at Henry, now, with a moment's intense gratitude, and with affectionate, eager hope. But his brow resumed his impassive—his even (latterly in their walk) tremendous secretiveness and gloom; expressive seemingly of impenetrable mystery, at which Helena's soul seemed almost to shrink, though Henry looked more handsome, more religious, more spiritually, sentimentally, romantically noble than ever; and superior *EVEN TO NATURE*—that is, man's nature of the streets.

The pair proceeded in silence and coldness, and (as it were) in watchfulness. Suspicion set again in—that opened gulf to love, over which there is only a thread for a bridge remaining to the possibility of love's re-establishment. They arrived in Great Ormond-street. At this point of their walk Henry suddenly paused, and astonished Helena by telling her that he was not going into the house (although he lived there); and that he was then about to say a final farewell to her. Whilst she was looking at him fixedly, as if feeling it impossible to believe the words he spoke, and perfectly at a loss to account for his reasons and eager to know why it was that he was so abruptly (and so madly, apparently) quitting her, Henry, as if suddenly thinking of



“ Magic bird ” embossed on the silver hilt of Henry Jerningham's mysterious present.

its necessity, placed in her hand the miniature glaive with which he had the moment before cut the lace of her boot; saying that he presented the dagger to her as a keepsake, and that WHEN SHE USED IT (“*which she would*”), she was to “*think of him.*” She gave one glance at this mysterious present of the dagger (or glaive) as it fell, heavy with its solid silver and gems, into her hand. She was astonished how Henry could have become possessed of such an implement. It was partly drawn, but she could not help noticing that the sheath was, doubtless, also of solid chased silver of heavy, inimitable workmanship. For 'twas superbly wrought; and with the massy hilt, it looked like a miracle of the silver-worker's art. The weapon had an

enormous emerald of deeply-coruscating, many-greened glow; flashing a suggested, supernatural, changing body-light, arrow-keen and sharp, against the dawn. The rays, urged as out of an abyss, flashed from the green heart of the magic *smaragd*. This priceless emerald was deep-set in the bosses of the handle of the dagger or *yataghan*. When placed in Helena's small, trembling hand, it weighed it down as if it were as half-a-hundredweight of silver.

"Keep this shining token for my sake. It is something which shall not quit you for the rest of your life. And use it for my sake. REMEMBER ME," were the words that Henry spoke, or seemed to speak. "*Remember me*," indeed, sounded as if it were an ominous farewell, coming out of darkness, or spoken *to her soul* by nobody, or not even by a voice *from within*. For whether to the right, or whether to the left, or whether down and into shadow, or up into light—whether that light was of the eclipsed gaslight or of the dawn—it was impossible to say. In two plain words, the figure that *had been Henry (thus far)* disappeared. Such playing with the eyesight it is impossible to explain. For the bodily figure faded—as if into the *flat of things*, to use a scarcely intelligible expression, but the only mode in which we can explain the effect. Henry was no longer there; leaving Helena to gaze at the streets as if in search of him, or in search of *something* in a last night's *dream*; absurdly into a small, dimpled *slant* of attraction, soliciting her eye, or a pool of rain in the road, that might have shown (passing over it) the flutter of a light or the flutter of a shadow, just as accident in the weather induced. Was it fancy, or was there a dreading, real trembling of the stones of the pavement? shivering consciously from under where HE lately stood, and slanting magnetically to the assumed spot, or point, where the figure seemed to shrink, and (at which point) to be taken-in, passing through to *some other side*—even into the air that "interspaced" from the houses on one side, to the houses on the other side of the street? Thus did Henry disappear, like an apparition.

Helena recovered with a dreadful long hysterical sigh ; as if arousing from out a dream. She reached her home ; she turned tremblingly the lock of the street-door with her latch-key. And when she entered she found her mother sitting-up for her, with a shawl folded for warmth around her shoulders, and reclining lonely in a chair in the front parlour, with a book taken to read to beguile the time, but which had not been read ; and with a lamp flickering down to its doom in the last sparks of exhausted nursing, and of hopeless, sleepy maintenance. This latter light had formed the care, to maintain, of poor Mrs. Fielding for nearly the last hour. Alone she had sat and ruminated ; and she had counted the weary clocks. Nevertheless, she now was overjoyed to see her daughter's face. She hastily, but quietly, fastened up the street-door. The watching mother had been sitting-up for her daughter who was out alone at that time of night—which fact tells its own tale of melancholy and of anxiety. And she sat down simply, now, with an air of incredulous, suspicious astonishment, gazing at her daughter as if she had suddenly become lunatic, or was deceiving, or was dreaming ; as Helena—fast as her emotion, and her plenteously-falling tears would permit—was telling her mother (now with no secrets or reserve) all her disappointed, bitterly-felt repulsion of the evening—this miserable evening.

“My child—my child ! What do you mean ? You look too earnestly and too truthfully for deceit. But what must I believe, when that which you tell me about Mr. Jerningham is absolutely—wholly *false* ? False, my child ! He is at this moment upstairs asleep in bed. Who is that with whom you have been ? Oh, Helena ! miserable girl—betrayed, and now deceiving me—telling me with that calm, unhesitating, assured face, and with false tears—oh, Helena—Helena !” And the mother was crying bitterly. “Mr. Jerningham has not been out of the house since the early part of the evening. He complained of feeling unwell—indeed he looked harassed and disturbed ; and he was really ill, I could see. And he went to bed actually

before the hour at which you say you arrived at the Ball. Oh, Helena—see how I cry for you!”

It was now Helèna's turn to doubt her mother, and to stare and to think she told falsehoods. But what was Helena's breathless astonishment and indescribable awe when her mother insisted that she should satisfy herself by the best assurance—that of her own eyesight? And that she should—making certainty still more certain—go upstairs and see Henry Jerningham asleep in his bed; for Mrs. Fielding knew that he had not locked his door.

This was done. The door of his bedroom was quietly unclosed; it was found unlocked on this occasion, as if for the very purpose of the proof of the wonder, and for the scene that followed. And Henry Jerningham was discovered calmly, profoundly sleeping—sleeping a *good sleep*, with his brow clear and happy.

Nothing more could be said or felt. There was no room for doubt upon the score of identity now, after this fixed, certain—this even appalling proof. Mother and daughter embraced and separated, perplexed, for the night. Helena was cold and speechless as marble. Her mother was tearful and affectionately voluble. Helena retired to her bedroom as if in a dream, or as if beset in a wilderness of feelings to which she could find no possible eluc but ONE—and that was unimaginable, insupportable horror, to THINK.

Had she been taken at her word? Had she, indeed, tempted the Devil in her rash desires? And in her heedless, unbelieving, guilty intensity of mad, loving, defiant adjuration, had she called with real effect upon the Beings who fill that Mysterious Invisible with terror? Had she adjured these—half in disbelief and defiance, and half in desire—until really ONE “came out” to answer her, and to gratify—and, provoked—to destroy? Had she compelled the Devil to disclosure to her through the very force of her wicked incredulity, and through that simple provocation offered by her mad, unholy, wildest persuasion of fable in regard to HIS EXISTENCE? “HE,” perhaps of all whom she invoked, Greatest among Them, the very DEVIL himself, with

smiles through the flowers of hell to convince, came to be her escort—to accompany her to that fatal Ball—to clasp her hand—to clasp her waist!

Poor Helena retired for the night in a dream. She walked to and fro like a moving statue with surprise in its eyes. She closed her bedroom-door and locked it hard, as if she had passed already out of this world “into the next world” in going into her room. And did she not really do so when the idea—to which no name could be given—occurred to her that her adjuration of the Very Devil to accompany her to this too fondly, madly dwelt-upon Ball had been successful? and that the Nameless One had, in reality, infused himself into a shape to gratify her impious, although her unthinking, vaunt? To have her as his own he yet would; and he would claim the redemption of her impious assurance of reliance on his coming, since she so madly, and yet so freely, offered herself—although with none but a child’s meaning—up to him.

Nor is this all—would it were all! In the morning the household was alarmed by an outcry. The discovery was made that the Victim lay pierced with the very poniard which the Stranger—or Henry Jerningham, since he bore his image—had given her! The consternation of the family may be imagined. She lingered amidst all the loving attention which frightened care and terrified impetuosity to help could lavish. And with the assistance of two doctors the ultimate event was kept-off for a time. At last she quietly expired, with a beautiful smile of angelic repentance for that terrible sin (at which many may laugh) of which she condemned herself (now openly) as guilty; although her impious summons was addressed supposedly to a mere name—disbelieved as possible, and impossible to be rendered to sight, or to become personal—in a real shape, by all. The mere inattentive, general Devil; not real; and only frightening children.

Can the Devil be provoked to show that—against all reason and common sense—he can, if he choose, take a visible form? And can he come amongst us as a human being, evading our *fright at him* by appearing simply as

one of ourselves? Can he put on beauty, and travel to and fro on the earth familiarly, amongst our familiar people? There have been certain notions that Satan can do this if he likes, and certain traditions about this possibility have been handed down. But all these strange superstitions are dismissed by the popular common sense. And no one may be said, now, to believe in the Devil; spite of all the assurances in the Bible; which are perhaps mythic only, but which cannot all treat of mere abstraction, vapour, and name only, in regard to him, one would suppose. But we do not really know much about these things; and thinking of them only bewilders more and more.

Helena declared—amidst all her prayers, and amidst her broken, distracting avowals—that remembering what she had said in her determination to go to the Ball, she had used the poniard in a sudden fit of religious despair; because on reconsidering, by the new light, all the incidents of her familiar companionship with this supposed Henry, she could find no resolution of the difficulty except in the recognition of her companion as an EVIL SPIRIT; dismissed as mad at once as this idea was by everybody, and even partly, at last, by herself.

But, after all, natural explanation might have been found for these strange circumstances; this double appearance might have been accounted-for, which terminated so tragically. Because truth lies often deeply hidden, and circumstances seem frequently so real and convincing that they extinguish our judgment, compelling Truth itself to betray and belie itself as fiction, and making the lie to appear truth, and to be the *conviction* of the truth in our facile minds. Perhaps there is no truth other than *that* truth which man makes individually for himself, and which is simply the product and the result of his foolish reason; which reason applied, perhaps, to matters out of the range of his senses, and tested as the weapon upon that armour assailed as not formed for it—ghostly armour which knows it not—fails. For reason must, of course, be a delusion with everything that transcends reason.

Henry Jerningham—himself overcome with terrible

pity, love, and terror at this unhappy end, which he and all the other people, of course, set down to delusions operating on Helena's sensitiveness and her disordered spirits—abandoned London for a long time. He availed himself with gladness and gratitude of an offer made by the Proprietors of a London Newspaper to assist as Second Correspondent, specially employed to report events—so far as they could succeed in chronicling them—in Paris during the time that the great—heretofore besieged—capital was held under the Red Flag by the tumultuous Commune—at war with all sense and society; with reason and with the foundation of things.

Who this person was—so greatly resembling Henry Jerningham—who went to the Ball with Helena, never appeared. But there were some reasons to suppose, which truth afterwards turned up, that Jerningham had a brother singularly like himself, only younger, who was aware of the strong affectionate feeling existent between Helena and Henry. And he thus had sought to turn this partiality to his own advantage—partly in joke, it is said, partly in selfish seriousness—hoping some incident in his favour. And so strange are the chances and the changes in this life, and so incredible sometimes are the mistakes and the singular accidents which *really* occur, that even all this latter supposition about Henry's brother might be fact.





VALEDICTORY NOTICE

FOR

GREAT ORMOND STREET AND ITS ASSOCIATIONS.



THE foregoing story—a tolerably long one, and a tolerably interesting one, as I think the reader, who has gone through it, will admit—fell into my way under remarkable circumstances. These circumstances are too long, and referring too much to myself (I, Engel De Lara, the editor of this work), now to detail. Of its truth, or of its falsehood—or “misrepresentation,” to use the milder, and perhaps the truer characteristic—I will not speak. The account is before the reader; the main facts are true; the marvellous part of it, especially the double appearance of Henry Jerningham, the reader may believe or disbelieve at his pleasure. I say no more than this. All these innumerable years of inquiry, and these incessant disquisitions upon the most important questions (incontestably), that can occupy the mind of man, seem vain. For the one half of the world is in the midst of truly the hopeless dispute whether miracle is possible at all; or whether there are Gods in nature, or nothing in Nature *but* Nature—for every world, real or supposed, must have a God or a nature; or be natural. Now;—is or is not miracle wholly impossible—now, or heretofore, or henceforward—being only a delusion? nature being nature, and nothing else; facts being facts and nothing else? In other words, everything came here and fixed itself from either “above” or “below.” If everything came out of the

ground, then religion is "nature," and man is "nature," and evolution is "nature;" and miracle, and outside-will, different from the world's-will (which is not miracle) is *impossible*. One half of the world insists on this. Who shall decide? No one can. If religion came from "above" ("above" or "below" is all one in the philosophic sense; but, nevertheless, we mean from "outside," or from "over the head of man") :—if religion came from "above," and the "possibility" of man came from above, then man, in his origin, is divine; and revelation (or the disclosure of God supernaturally to man) is true. If man came from "below," and if the stars and God's special will to make him had nothing to do with man; and if revelation only springs from man's fears; and if his being here is a chance, and his mind is nothing but the perfection of physical necessities, a Darwinian evolvment, or the "selection of the fittest"—why, let us have the courage to say and admit all this. But these audacious philosophers have not the courage to say this, because, simply, their only *plausible* assertions start with false presupposal which they pretend to take for granted; while truly the contest with them is world-old, and they cannot stand it; and they therefore evade the cut-through effected of them by some metaphysical wielders of swords—swords taken from another armoury than that facile, easily-inclining, falsely forged one of mere human reason.





BOOK THE SECOND.

THIS contains a history of occurrences in London in the year 1856,—as referring to which are the succeeding sections. This part of the story will be found to be in strict character with this particular period—1856. The political allusions, and the references to public characters and to public events at that precise time, closely correspond with genuine history. The sections of this part of the story are extended from special true incidents of my life; which I have noted as “The Life Guardsman”—A “Mob-Hunt”—“Grief”—“A Short Interlocutory”—The “Bal-Masqué”—“Truth in Travestie”—and the “Scene Final to this Second Book,” the “BURNING OF THE THEATRE.”

On a dull and quiet, but not particularly cold, afternoon of February, in A.D. one thousand eight hundred and fifty-six, I found myself pausing at the house where an excellent but eccentric friend, of some years' standing—Raymond Scatterworth by name—rented lodgings. He lived with his mother, a respectable woman, somewhat advanced in life, but sadly reduced in the world—that is, from her previous excellent position in it. She was the widow of a military officer who had had much more of which to boast in his experience in the West Indies than money at his banker's of which to talk, and from which to draw.

Raymond Scatterworth was by profession an artist; which in his case means a painter of chance portraits. He was a great reader and lover of books, rather lazy, very clever, but a little too fond of smoking a pipe and wasting costly half-hours away in summer at his open window, and in winter by the fireside of that

apartment which served him for *studio*, bedchamber, and reception-room all in one. He lived in one of those small, quasi-respectable streets situated north-east of the Regent's Park—in short, in Camden Town; and the back window of the house in which he had settled looked upon the uplands of Highgate, and commanded a view of its church with the thin spire upon the hill.

I had hardly intended to call upon him on this particular day, because I was bound further east upon a certain matter of business. But as I passed that well-known, somewhat narrow door—which, by the way, I rarely came up-to or passed by without its somehow opening—I observed one of the tallest of the tall Life Guardsmen of the neighbouring Barracks, in his closely-fitting scarlet jacket, and in his little military cap set smartly upon one side and verily “crowning” his tuft of light hair. He was standing with his cane flourishing in his hand exterminating imaginary flies on the doorstep, which latter was white as housemaid's whiting could make it. The soldier was engaged in the exchange of some very tender confidential compliments, apparently, with Mary-Jane, the servant of the house. And when Mary-Jane—who, by-the-bye, had in two senses an excellent face of her own—saw me approaching as if to ask after my friend, Mr. Scatterworth—though had I not happened upon so unmistakably loving a dialogue and the accidental circumstance, I should have probably passed on my way—I say, when she saw me she fidgeted somewhat, making as if she were irresolute whether to return indoors and leave her red-coated swain without his accustomed prolonged farewell and his, perhaps, press of the hand or kiss, or to meet the difficulty by boldly encountering my eye in a business-like way in her character of servant, and soliciting as it were my question. During this little piece of amiable pantomime I stopped; and the soldier also stopped and took a short step aside and waited at “attention,” with great round eyes fixed in my face.

“Ah, Mary,” said I, smiling good-naturedly, as much as to imply that although I understood the present confused position of affairs between Venus and Mars, I

had no disposition to bring clouds over the opportunities of communion of either man-of-war or Musidora.

“Good evening, sir,” replied Mary, slightly blushing, but otherwise with a face of unconsciousness—a really admirable face. “Mr. Scatterworth is in, sir. Will you go in, sir?”

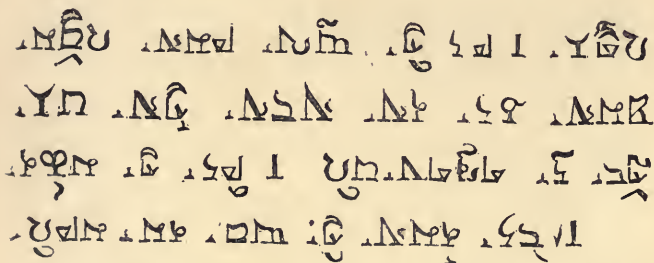
“Well, though I didn’t intend it, I *will* step in and ask him how he is. Tell him I am here, Mary, will you? Say I’m downstairs.”

Mary opened the door to return into the house. At this moment I heard from upstairs, the dwelling being small, as I have already said, the chink of a **PIECE OF MONEY** tumbling on the floor of my friend Scatterworth’s little apartment. It had an unusual chink and ring, this piece of money, the ear associating it instantly as a crown-piece, though of a dead, lumpy, heavy kind. Strange to say, there was, or seemed, an *echo* below to its fall; I mean down in the kitchen. In the same moment the Life Guardsman, who was jauntily and militarily stepping off like a dandy from the door backwards, made his step a false one. And down he came on the flags with his huge length of small red jacket and three miles of red striped pantaloons. Though he rose to his feet again instantly, I caught in a moment’s glance the fact that his face was quite changed and white; that he was suppressing through his close-set lips a positive scream of pain; that he clutched in the extremity of his anguish the iron railing to support himself; and that his ankle was dislocated if not broken. All this happened in a moment, and the people began to gather round.

Mary, in fright, ran off like a madwoman to the nearest surgeon’s; and the little bustle and talk at the door had now brought down Scatterworth. We shook hands, each with a frightened look, and we endeavoured to help the poor Guardsman as well as the sudden surprise and the extremity of his pain would admit. A hackney-cab passing at the moment was stopped, and the surgeon arriving simultaneously, the unfortunate soldier was placed in the cab. Though he bore his pain manfully, I could see that he was suffering to an awful

degree. Finally, Mary, forgetting all her duties of servant in her terror and anxiety, and leaving the street door to shut of itself upon intruders, started after the cab; and the surgeon and patient, who were seated in it and bound for the hospital, went away. Then I, again shaking hands with Raymond Scatterworth, followed him upstairs into his room. Both of us were in a state of considerable excitement in regard of the accident, and we were no little discomposed.

“Poor fellow,” said I, entering Raymond’s room. “It is an unfortunate thing for him! He will be laid-up for some time; and you must make your minds certain



The magic strain heard “as supposed from the Barracks in the Regent’s Park.” The above are musical notes—“from an exceedingly ancient score of Eastern origin.”

for considerable *contretemps* in the attendance here, for Mary is of a feeling heart, besides her evident love; and I saw the accident went deep with her, both as regards man and lover.”

“And a very remarkable accident, too, to happen to a soldier. They who, of all the world, are the firmest on their feet, disciplined to defy all sorts of accidents of street or roadway; all perils of marching and counter-marching, on foot or on horseback, on heel or on toe. In fact, soldiers are to be looked upon as people the most expert in all displays equestrian, sedentary—I was going to say saltatory. They are equal to dancing-masters, or to the dancing dervishes. You must not mind my joking. I am sincerely sorry for our military friend; and I hope we shall hear a good account of him

shortly. But I have a most odd thing to show you. Come into my room and see."

"What is it?" I demanded.

"You shall see," said Raymond. "It is a Coin—a Piece of Money; but such a singular thing. And the way it came into my possession is really very extraordinary as an incident in street life. Quite striking. I will tell you."

"Let me hear."

"So you shall. But here comes my mother. She will be sorry to learn the Life Guardsman's accident. And not a little sorry, too, at Mary's absence, who is very essential for our tea at this time of day, I assure you. For I have finished my work for the day—an ugly portrait for the wife of a City plum-merchant—and my mother looks for some intellectual gossip or talk about the Beautiful over her tea—an expectation and a desire in which I rarely disappoint her if I am able; or if I have taste enough to meet her really fine taste, and answer her remarks."

"I had not intended to call upon you to-day, but I will stay now if you will ask me," said I. "Tea is tempting, and we will have some talk."

"You would greatly put me out, *mon cher*, if you meditated escape now we have you, I assure you. I feel really as if I could think and talk of nothing but this poor lad's disaster, and of my strange Coin. And I want somebody to talk it to—one who understands these things."

I remained, in short, to tea with Raymond and his mother. In a little while he went to a box with clasps, in which, as an artist, he kept an accumulation of odds and ends and queer articles. And what he brought out and showed me I will tell in a few farther sentences, as giving more room.

At this time Mary-Jane returned. She was in a sad state of distress as to her lover, poor Richard Curtis, for this was the name of the Life Guardsman. He had been admitted into the Hospital, where the doctors had pronounced his case a bad one. I drew out a half-sovereign; I could not particularly afford it—why

should I say so? I could *very ill* afford it—and I presented it to Mary as a *solatium* to her suffering friend. She thanked me with great feeling.

"Which is his regiment?" I asked; "is it the 'First' or the 'Second' Life Guards?"

"Richard Curtis, private of the 'First Life Guards,'" was the tearful answer. "His uncle was with the famous Twenty-third Dragoons, sir, at the Battle of Talavera, so I have heard him say. There was a charge which made a prodigious noise of popularity at the time, so he says. This uncle of his, of whom I have been told very much, was his mother's brother, sir; and his name was Thomas Desborough. Perhaps you may have heard of him at some of the newspaper offices?"

"No, indeed, I have not, Mary," said I. "Doubtless it is to my loss, in all sincerity, for I am an admirer of all brave soldiers."

Then Mary descended to her duties, and there was silence among us.

Raymond returned to the table and produced upon it before me a Piece of Silver Money—very old, very defaced, crinkled and crinkled all over, and about the size of a five-shilling piece. It had once been, I would suppose, about double its present thickness; but it was now worn greatly away. And, queerly enough, the rim had been spared, while a concavity had been the result of extreme age, or of continual use, inside the rim. I took it up between finger and thumb. An unpleasant sharp sensation, as if one of the fine nerves transmitted a smartly electric twinge simultaneously to the heart and head, pricking the former like a needle, was the consequence. Seemingly after a second or two, however, this effect only took place; as if the warmth of my fingers had to take up in some way and combine the influence.

"Are you learned in numismatics?" said I, "and have you spelled out this nearly wholly obliterate inscription? The coin seems very old."

"I am *not* learned in coins," replied Raymond. "Look, yourself, and see if you can make out what this Piece of Money, medal or memorial, should be. I really should much like to know."

I did, indeed, look, but all was a puzzle. There had been the head of a sultan, chief, "Imperator," or other distinguished person or king imprinted upon the face of the coin, but all was now blurred. The incrustation of ages seemed to be upon this medal; this speck, as it were, of extinct vitality, survived from the remotest generations. It was dead-coloured as lead; it felt excessively heavy in the hand; it had a chain of Hebrew characters round it, almost changed into Cabalistic signs in their incoherence. Holes seemed fused in multitude upon the obverse, as if points of burning wires or electric lines had pierced it deep. I caught some Roman marks, as I thought, as if the Coin had been struck in, possibly, a remote dependency of the empire, or during the governorship of some Imperial *prætor* or other lord of the Roman rule.

I placed again the Piece of Silver Money upon the table. And the next moment a dreadful nervous thrill ran up my fingers, coursed through my left arm, and struck like a spear of ice, as if into the midst of my chest. I really laughed, the sensation was so extraordinary, though I verily believe I turned pale, as I certainly felt ill.

"That Piece of Money I should say had been charged by a very powerful electric battery, in the absence of other knowledge or information about it. I never met such an extraordinary, uncomfortable, ancient five-shilling piece, as I should call it, in my life."

"I have scarcely been able to think of anything but this absurd Piece of Money since it came into my possession," cried my friend Scatterworth. "Listen; for singular the whole affair was! I had four days ago a business errand to my picture-frame maker, and not finding that sort of frame which I wanted at his shop, having to complete and to send in a certain portrait for an M.P., with which I had taken considerable pains, and which I wanted to show off, for he has a handsome house, to the greatest advantage—— Hark you, De Lara! By all that's strange!"

Just at this moment there came a low hum, seemingly in the room, as if of the wind in summer through a

perforation in a stone, and swelling firmly into a musical note, or a thin, ethereal, long-drawn semitone. Or it more greatly put me in mind of that celebrated ringing of the Harping-Image;—which sound, from all I can gather from those who have heard it, very closely resembles the tone of a musician's tuning-fork when he puts a pianoforte in order, or the vibration, in a resonant atmosphere, of a prodigious (metallically) hot harp-string. This much-talked-of sound will immediately recur to the reader; mysterious as it is. I mean that note or musical *aspiration* which travellers, ancient and modern, ascribe to the vocal Memnon to be heard at some particular moments of the sunrise, when the marble sounds.

We looked at each other astonished.

"What is that?" asked Mrs. Scatterworth.

Raymond, after a pause, with his eyes fixed, and with a *frown* of attention, burst into a laugh.

"It must be in the street," said I, "for otherwise such a peculiar tingling could only proceed from some bewitched *bowl*—china suddenly rendered vocally sensitive, and, in its own way, *ringing to speak*. Wishes or pain seem odd things to associate with the humming—the seeming desire to speak of china. But does that not sound like it? 'Have we not Hiren here?' Hark! how droll!"

Now when our attention was fixed the long sound ceased, or rather it wound away, until the ear—unless fairies' ears—could catch it no longer. And then there came in the silence of the street outside, as we sat, an unaccountable superb sound of distant music, so beautiful that we were fain to listen, even to sigh at it. Being rather a sensitive person in this respect, my mind was all in a flame with fancy the very way the music seemed to set me. And I painted to myself a delicious story of romance, suggested by the tune, while this music was continuing. But my dream was rudely broken by the clattering of a sudden chance cart which passed. Then, indeed, all my fine ideas melted into air, and I was aware but of jingling iron and of the grinding cart-wheels vulgarly—very.

“Music at the Barracks,” said I, for we were in the close neighbourhood of Albany Barracks; or not very far from them. “It is at the Horse-barracks in Albany-street—a military band.”

“That is very unlikely; from my experience at this time of the evening. But they play wonderfully well, almost magically well I should say—whoever they are,” said Raymond. “Mother—Mr. De Lara stands in need of some tea. I have not told you how I acquired this queer-looking Coin. This picture-dealer and picture-frame maker of whom I spoke (and whose name is Henderson—Henderson of Long Acre), he is a sort of patron, in his way, of mine, and a good friend. Well, this Mr. Henderson, not finding in his warehouse the sort of frame of which I stood in need, proposed that we should take a cab and drive eastwards, where he thought (in Leadenhall Street, or at some other place which he might know), that we might find the object of our search. Therefore we sallied forth. Henderson, previous to driving into the City, professed a wish to call in Spring Gardens to take up a bill, or to make a payment, or something of the sort; I forget what. So *embarking* in a chance cab, which we met coming down St. Martin’s Lane, we directed cabby to proceed towards Charing Cross. There was the usual crowd to be found in those streets at the time of the day at which we trotted down St. Martin’s Lane, and there was some show or some fuss going on about the Parks, which added to the ordinary multitude. Just as we were about to turn into Trafalgar Square, heard over all the clatter of the carriages and the hum of the West End, was a sudden whooping and an outcry, as if ‘Stop Thief,’ and as if of the common loose run of people when a pickpocket or depredator—small or large—is to be hurtled; and apprehended or not.

“We turned our heads—including our driver; nay, our horse did likewise turn *his* head, and he stumbled for his inopportune curiosity. Instinctively we sought the direction from whence these sounds of alarm came sweeping on to us. And in a moment or so there rushed precipitously, riotously along a hundred or more

of very low-looking fellows, mingled with some screaming women and a sprinkling of yelling, capering, and laughing boys. This confused mob was *hunting* something, or somebody. And the cause became manifest, when, as it were from out the midst of the crowd, burst one of the most singular apparitions in the likeness of a man which it has ever been my lot to behold. The excitement of the mob was at once explained. It was, indeed, the queerest figure.

“An instant’s glance told me all about him, or at least all which I was likely to know; for it was a seeming lunatic that was coursed by the people. One of those strange broad-brimmed hats which the Tyrolese and the Italians and wild artists wear was upon his head. His face was withered, and as pale as possible and shrunken; but he had a dangerous flash of the eye like a chased jerboa. His jacket of dark green plush, as it seemed, was ragged; and it was hung about with endless red ribbons or strings. He had wiry moustaches, grizzled straggling long hair, and a beard like the ‘ace of spades.’ The rest of his dress and person I could take no account of in the instant scamper that *engulphed* us all in the cab, as it were. There was a hustle and a bustle and a rustle, and a fuss and tussle all about this poor foreign man, and a movement, as I thought, as if to seize him or to knock him down. But it was all a matter of moments. Just now a handful of dirt from an unseen thrower struck fairly on, and spattered back from his cheek. And I saw, almost as I may say strongly, a *livid* white patch of *fear* disclosed, as in answer, on his cheek instantly. Dogs barked; laughter and yells and clatter arose. And now, as if to complete the confusion, the bells of St. Martin’s Church were heard high overhead in the steeple—for we were now close under the church of St. Martin’s.

“Sounds in the heavens, as they seemed, but loud enough to stun—struck up into a jubilee—a very metropolitan storm of a peal. The royal flag, displayed at the steeple corner, was taken suddenly as in the grasp by the wind; and it absolutely *chattered* as if its crimson and its gold lions would have been torn out of it in

strips. I heard it shiver like as if a sail in a storm fluttering for a moment like mad over all. The poor Italian gave one eager look into the roadway, and then dashed in heedless amongst the horses and carriages; like a comet of coloured tapes, dirty stockings, and torn spatterdashes. He flew past the door of our cab, out of the window of which I, like a fool, was gazing with all my might; and I dare say with great staring, inviting eyes. He caught my eye. He seemed to see all about my pity in an instant; and while he *switched* past the nose of our poor *jumentum*, or hackney-horse, which it was comical to see toss-up his distressed head and sniffing nostrils in astonishment at this so sudden rebuff, he flung in, though with something like a graceful though a furious twirl like a Mercury, a Piece of Money which might have done my face sharp mischief, if it had not alighted (as it did) fairly in the stubbly straw at the bottom of this our ramshackling fusty chariot of St. Martin's Lane triumph. The whole storm of flight and of pursuit drifted by us like an Atlantic hurricane; and verily the sun came out two minutes after, as if in flashing glorification; leaving us nothing as a result of all this bustle except the veritable Coin, medal, silver hailstone, or what not; this remnant of Tubal Cain and the first forgers which so puzzles you and all of us; and which would(I believe) bedevil the most skilful decipherer of these 'leaden original letters' which the old world throws fancifully occasionally up to us."

Scatterworth stopped after he had run on thus, and then continued—

"But I must go and smoke. You, De Lara, I know, do not care for smoking; and so I will leave you to talk to my venerable parent during my five or ten minutes' absence. I shall not be much longer absent."

And so saying, and dropping his cap on the side of his head with a jaunty and somewhat too "devil-may-care" air to quite please my sober notions, away Raymond went. My idea of the well-conducted young man—especially in the presence of so thorough a gentlewoman and so good a woman as his mother—felt put out in Scatterworth's look.

For some reason—I hardly know why—I directly felt melancholy. Mrs. Scatterworth, too, seemed—strangely for her—at the moment greatly depressed. I saw tears in her eyes, and she sighed. We remained in silence some time; during which a snatch of a song would descend, even through the closed door of Scatterworth's bedroom, or *studio*, with the smell of tobacco.

I did not like all these symptoms of carelessness, and began to think Raymond changed.

I hardly seemed inclined to believe Scatterworth's strange story as to the romantic and purposeless manner in which he became possessed of this singular leaden-looking coin; until the facts were confirmed to me as true by his mother. But as she corroborated his account in all particulars, I was fain to believe it, and to express my reliance in the old-fashioned way. So wild and unaccountable an apparition as a mad Italian, dressed like a Merry-Andrew, or like the *Arlecchino* (or rather the *Scaramuccia*), of one of his own national comedies, appearing in the streets coursed by an English mob in so commonplace a London thoroughfare as St. Martin's Lane, really seemed partaking much more of the Victoria Theatre dramatic incidents, or of caricature, than a sober fact—true as a metropolitan cab. But the most unlikely sights are to be seen sometimes, and in London streets too; for I have myself beheld (and at no more distant date than this last summer) a bishop driving in a "Hansom" cab, and a crowd of ragged children, worse than those turning out of any Irish village, careering for coppers; gyrating, head over heels, in the dust like the revolving "Three Legs" of the Isle of Man; in fullest equal pace in Baker Street, with a running "Atlas"—with all the people looking as if it were quite natural.

Raymond's mother made a movement to me to close the door, which I did; and then she seemed to settle herself to tell me something.

"Wonderful to say, Raymond's character seems almost wholly to have changed *in three days*," said his mother to me, when we were perfectly safe from interruption by him, or by any one else. "Could you have

composed; (as if to do something,) I took vacantly up the Silver Piece of Money from the mantelpiece on which Scatterworth, after I had finished its examination, had placed it.

I could not suppress an exclamation. I dropped it quickly out of my fingers. *It was burning hot.* And when it struck the floor, I distinctly saw a spark of intolerable, but instant, light glance up from it, like a white-hot arrow. Scatterworth burst into a laugh; and even his mother, with tears in her eyes, could scarcely resist a smile.

"Why, De Lara, you are strangely put out with something to-day, to think *that* hot," Raymond cried. "Look here. Why it is not hot at all."

And he stooped, and reaching out his fingers, he took up with the same coolness as he would have picked up a flower, the Coin; which when I looked at in his palm, was as dead-coloured, and to all appearance as cold and harmless, as when he first exhibited it to me. I felt it, and it was cold as a stone. What was the matter with me?

"But see the mark," said I, as I pointed with some triumph, spite of the pain which almost made me feel sick, to the blister on two of my fingers; which must speak truth.

"This should at all events prove something," cried I. And it *did feel* something; for I bore the mark for a long while afterwards.

We remained in conversation for a considerable time. There was no allusion made, however, in Raymond's presence to the subject upon which his mother had opened her mind to me. It seemed that there were a desire on each of our sides not to interrupt our present complacence. And the animated flow of discourse concerning the unaccountable Coin, (upon which Raymond was eloquent,) and other interesting topics which arose to our attention, was unbroken by allusions, or even approach, to distasteful as they seemed at the moment, or to painful matters. So time went on; and after spending on the whole an interesting evening, in which, if truth were to be told, I felt for both mother and

son, I took my leave. I bade them a friendly good-bye; and I descended into the street to return to my own home.

Thinking all the way as I went home, I arrived at my door. And all the next day, and indeed for several days afterwards, I could hardly get out of my head the recollection of this singular evening, and the new and unexpected fears which had been excited as to my friend Scatterworth's future, and as to the comfort of his mother.

I lived at this period in lodgings in Percy Street, Tottenham Court Road; and on reaching home a week or two after this visit to Scatterworth I found lying on my table a letter in a large fine envelope. On opening it, I discovered it to contain an "Editorial Card" for a Grand *Bal Masqué*, to take place at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden. A little crushed note, at the same time, fell out of the envelope; and in it I read the following:—

"*Tyburnia (not the Tree),*

"*Monday, 3rd March, 1856.*

"MY DEAR DE LARA,—Health and greeting. Also, *Eccolo*, as the Italians say! Behold an order for some piebald pages of London life to-morrow night. Join me, if Your High Mightiness it so pleaseth, at the Club at eleven. Battersby and Birdseye are to be of the party (clever men, both!) Believe me (since the Anthropophagian hath chosen to turn me out as its Editor), your discrowned and destitute man of letters and of the Press,

"PONSFORD UNDERLINK."

Though I felt no great inclination—under other circumstances I might have liked, but I had not been quite well for some period, and I had moreover encountered one or two money vexations which had not improved my finances or my temper—for amusements or for anything else,—though, I repeat, I felt no great readiness or aptitude for the *disurre* sort of entertainment (to which, however, I was very kindly invited), I yet went. I fear that the results will long abide in my

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memory. They were such as drew a large amount of public attention at the time. And they most singularly struck and impressed—aye, horrified me—with feelings which will probably last for years.

But little thinking of what was to happen, though in an infinitely more gloomy and philosophic mood than in a festive or a careless one, I dressed myself; yea, in an absurd black long gown, like that of a University doctor, put a round cap on my head, affixed a mask to my face with a gauze beard, ordered a cab to be called, and I drove somewhere about eleven o'clock on the cold night of Tuesday, the 4th of March, 1856, to the Theatre Royal (or the Royal Italian Opera), Covent Garden, where a grand *Bal Masqué* was to be given that night, under circumstances of combined unparalleled splendour. So the advertisements assured me, which, however, overdo sometimes and misrepresent. For even the public newspapers, though issued with Government stamps, are not always to be believed, especially when they proffer puffs of a theatre.

So let the reader forget all about this present period, and travel back with me to Tuesday, the 4th of March, 1856, and to Covent Garden Theatre, as it was on that night.

THE BAL MASQUÉ.

Time, that no longer with leaden wings, but with spangle-lacquer ones, movest onward into the future! Thou first-drawn breath of the short-time-since newly-born day! Hour (or half-hour), which just past that solemn, as yet breathless one, carriest with it no record of midnight but its cloud, and of the new day but the fresh dawn-streaks. Time! what may we not urge to thee of thy newly-furbished "scythe," and of thy withered brows bound with roses? Roses amidst the snows of thy lustrously reverend age, and brows so blushless! Time's old brows blushless here!

Oh, wildest din that sets the solemn Midnight-rocking in her slumbrous *fauteuil*! that "ebon chair" which Milton adjures as to be stayed only by another (almost equally as herself) Dim Mightiness! We mean in this latter the corrugated Hecate, with her heart of

lignum vitæ, and her eyes of coal. Oh, reeling horror! wild drift of muslined beauties and of feathered things, *ricochetting* as upon the air-spun medium of the rampant and spark-treading polka. Oh, mob of Bacchanals! Red as red ochre can make human faces, and with "crystal cups," the property of Mr. Payne, refreshment contractor! Ye whose purple grapes shall be of blood of the thinnest, and whose frantic *evokes* shall impress as of unmistakable "Cockney." Oh, mighty Jullien! Mars of Melodists! Lord of Thunder amidst the Musical Mountains, provoker of orchestral earthquake; very Napoleon of fiddles; thou than whose no Munchausen horn can be more pertinacious and less to be resisted. Oh, Battalia of the Bal! with multitudinous musical *explosions*, some all honourable and glorious, and others of whine and bombast, and (as the artillery of a mad Momus) tearing and rending like the complicate gun-powder *expletives* of a field of battle. Oh, all ye festoons of roses and heap of flowers! ye *all but gold* chandeliers! ye masks! and ye minutes of delirium and of champagne! (sour as the midnight fancies and sulky in effect as the mood of some wakeful hermit in bed, as he listens, half in envy, half in horror, to the distant rustic fiddles as they celebrate some country wedding, where beauty frisks delighted, and buskined bumpkins caper jovial). Oh, thou stationary hailstorm of glass drops! And thou wondrous central chandelier, shining prismatically with bridging rainbows! Oh, all that constitutes a Bartholomew Fair heaven, of which Gye should be the builder, and Jullien, with his brigade of harmony, the possessing genius! So much of my masquerade thoughts in this masquerade place.

Hopping, stamping, shrieking, roaring, swearing, shamming, staring; see the mob of dancers whirl in a great circle! A self-denying Bedlam, where even the madness is illegitimate, because *untrue*. Why is it that the English can only make fools of themselves in great things, and never in small? Ask for these to-morrow, and like Mercutio you shall find them "grave men." There will be Smith, very respectably behind his counter; Bates at his brewery; and Jones in his court

of law (upright-walking lawyer he in the daytime), launching out with high-pitched trumpet tongue in behalf of outraged virtue, spotless matronhood, and graceful virginity. Or tearing full of holes (like a huge, too rashly widely-opened ancient cloak) with his vehemence and his wit some profligate's career of wasted opportunities and squandered money. What a thing of place this virtue is! What a difference in men's characters there is as the *sun* or *gas* shines upon them! The women are divinities; grubs by day; very starred butterflies by night. But after all stingless dragon-flies are these "*demoiselles*." Their garden of roses is a garden of paper, and their "green fields" are shining foil and the sweeping of the theatrical property-room. But many are sugar-plums of women nevertheless!

Oh, monster Cyclop! Thou Jullien, with thy relentless horn, blowing up all Etna to its hammers! Thou who madest "Peter" in thine opera dull as a Muggletonian, and tried at a monster theatrical management in bygone days, fitter for the Circus Maximus than for Drury Lane Theatre. Oh, Thou of the Whiskers and the Waistcoat! Have pity on our sense of the magnificent. Destroy us not with thy, oh, far too overwhelming, noisy portraitures of thyself!

After all there is more wisdom to be picked-up at Jullien's *Bals Masqués* than in most other places. Reader, are these the souls or the bodies of people that are yelling, stamping, ogling, and wildly dancing? Are these Regent Street counting-house or drawing-room men, or lunatic tailors? Give us the man himself!—and these must be accepted as the men—and not their mere outside. We are constrained to think *these* the real people; and the *daylight shows*—shows that are animate and that we meet in the street.

The polka ceases. The dancing crowd scatters. The dust subsides. The chandeliers no longer twinkle and flash in the uproar. All the crowd retire. People leave the stage to the proper *personæ dramatis* of this our "picture" of one of Jullien's masked balls. Then a section of the moving mass advances as if commencing

a concerted piece at one of the Operas. But during the "interlocution" twos and threes and groups of maskers pass and repass amongst the speakers; and sometimes accost, and sometimes exchange various personal familiarities that are taken or not taken.

John Anderson my Joe. Well, this is pleasant. Peter the Cruel, thou art for once a good fellow, and comest out to please a friend at a masquerade. And, Magog, is not this better than smoking away thy lonely evening after business in thy parlour at Paddington?

Magog. Paddington? I beg you to remember I am fashionable. Degrade me not by supposing that I live at *Paddington*. No, sir, Tyburnia is my *locale*. You ought to know that there are now but two fashionably green places in this desert of London—only two districts sacred to first-class people. And the one is Belgravia, and the other is the would-be lordly Tyburn neighbourhood.

Little Tom Horner. Ah, "would-be." It is indeed "would-be" with this latter. I know some fashion-mongers (or fishmongers) in this same Tyburnia. Men with as much heart in their bosom as there is knocker on their door. For knockers have become vulgar. It is the bell, and the words "servants" and "visitors," that are to impress now.

Magog. Ah, we have grown delicate and fashionably nervous. Rough appeals to your conscience as equally as to your street-door have become vulgar. Fashion, by a very clever man, who sometimes said sharp things, has been called "Gentility running away from vulgarity, and afraid of being overtaken by it. It is a sign the two things are not far asunder."

Little Tom Horner. I know whom you mean. A prince among truth-tellers, who because he said plain things, and was a genius, I suppose, the world struck through with its spiteful arrow like a Saint Sebastian.

Magog. Well, I always carefully avoid speaking truth—especially of one's friends. And therefore I have never lost a friend. Our sharp executioners' swords, clumsily wielded, are just as likely to whip off our own

noses as to decapitate others' heads. I hate scandal. "If every person is to be banished from society," says a very clever contemporary who knows the world well, "who runs into debt and cannot pay—if we are to be peering into everybody's private life, speculating upon their income, and cutting them if we don't approve of their expenditure—why, what a howling wilderness and intolerable dwelling this world would be! Every man's hand would be against his neighbour in this case, my dear sir, and the benefits of civilisation would be done away with. We should be quarrelling, abusing, avoiding one another. Our houses would become caverns; and we should go in rags because we cared for nobody. Rents would go down. Parties wouldn't be given any more. All the tradesmen of the town would be bankrupt. Wine, wax lights, comestibles, rouge, crinoline petticoats, diamonds, wigs, Louis Quatorze gimcracks and old china, park hacks and splendid high-stepping carriage-horses—all the delights of life, I say, would go to the deuce, if people did but act upon their silly principles, and avoid those whom they dislike and abuse. Whereas, by a little charity and mutual forbearance, things are made to go on pleasantly enough. We may abuse a man as much as we like, and call him the greatest rascal unhung, but do we wish to hang him therefore? No, we shake hands when we meet. If his cook is good, we forgive him; like Brummell we permit him to call us Tom, and let ourselves dine with him, and we expect he will do the same by us. Thus trade flourishes—civilisation advances; peace is kept; new dresses are wanted for new assemblies every week; and the last year's vintage of Lafitte will remunerate the honest proprietor who reared it."

Jack Sprat. All mere irony! All satire that is making everybody uncomfortable! Principles? Will principles give me a dinner? Will they allow me to reject that "fat" if I please, in reference to which my name has become so famous? Mr. Thackeray is contradicted in this very *Bal Masqué*. Here all is *show*, and therefore all is *real*. Your servant, Mr. Bumpkin. (*Accosts a countryman chanceways.*)

Bumpkin. Yaw, *Meinheer!* Yaw! yaw! (Grins at him as he passes.)

Jack Sprat. Heyday! I took you for a “Countryman,” and you answer me with as many “yaws” as a Dutch brig, or a veritable Rheinlander. You are a fool.

Magog. Let him go. He was intended to represent a Peasant of the Tyrol or a Black Forest Yager, a Zimmermann with his Solitude, or a sort of Adolph or Caspar; and you see Simmons or Nathan, not knowing the difference, has turned him out a “Chawbacon.” It was all “Teutonic” or “styles and pitchforks,” and the last had it. It is all one. The voice is the man. Accept that!

The party are lounging on. Jack Sprat answers an Alessandro Massaroni. Bene, bene, signor! Though your Italian might be less like Houndsditch—

The Brigand. Sir;—my lady—

Jack Sprat. Oh, I am sure I beg her pardon! Poverty, it is said, acquaints a man with strange bedfellows, and a Bal Masqué accommodates a man with queer partners. Good evening, Virginia! Comus, listen on this left side, and take that glass cup of yours out of the way. Yonder slink the devil and a hermit arm-in-arm. Here come Pan, Long Tom Coffin, the Heir of Redclyffe, and the Great Cham of Tartary. Fie, Broadbrim! I will tell thy Elders. What doest thou with that Romp? Bravo, Postillion! Well cracked indeed! Well spelt, Dunce, for once. D—n begins with a D. Also the Devil began with a “D”—which means “destiny.”

They move on.

Jack Sprat resumes. Why here we are, interchecked black and white like a chessboard. Kings and queens—and rooks jostle bishops.

Orange Moll offers her can. Scalding wine for an ill-natured Bishop out of his own mitre.

Dick Turpin. *Place aux dames!* Here we have queens—queens of the paving-stones. How do you do, Maid of “Saragossa” if of nowhere else?

Mephistophiles and Faust pass on in deep talk, Jonathan Wild following. A Wehr-Wolf watches the three from over the shoulders of the crowd.

Robinson Crusoe sauntering forward with a parrot leering on his shoulder. "Twenty-eight years alone on an uninhabited island on the coast of America near the mouth of the great river Oronoque." — *Poll Parrot.* "Poor Robin Crusoe! Poor Robin Crusoe! All alone too."

Faust apart to Mephistophiles as they return in the promenade. "I have heard a rumour of many worthy fellows that were out——"

Mephistophiles. Their mothers not knowing it. True. Why left you that charmer with whom I saw you so enthralled; and whom you abandoned abruptly in the dance for no seeming reason?



"All alone on an uninhabited Island—near the mouth of the Great River Oronoque."

Faust. Because in the hottest of it, when our lips almost at the closest met in the dance, I saw a red mouse jump out of her mouth.

Mephistophiles and Faust, arm-in-arm, pass on. Bal-four of Burley stops them and shakes hands.

Jack Sprat to Magog. That is a good devil—that Mephistophiles. There goes the music! They are at it again—dancing like mad. The lights "enrage." All the "five worlds" seem to be pouring out their people hither—their devils or their angels. Traps yawn. Oh

what a whisking and frisking!—what a storm of feathers and furbelows!—what a hurry-skurry! What a kissing and hissing of spurs! A vocal fit cometh upon me. Friends, get we up a chorus! Though, you know, only at present a “man in buckram” or in a domino, I am (in my own person) a scribbler of mark—full of plumes as any threepenny Apollo—a London “penny-a-liner.”

Magog. Quite right. I suspect that mask to be Thomas Babington Macaulay;—he I mean—that Dominic Sampson with the big book. Notice him not. 'Tis not *etiquette* to seem to see literary people within the roar of Jullien's *Orchestre de Bal*. Up with our chorus then, descriptive of a Masquerading Morality with a Quaker at the head of it! A cheer for Broadbrim as leading skipper, hugging the anchor! Thank that bright son of Parnassus, Robert Bell—whom by-the-bye I see here as Narcissus:—from whom, of this rolling barrel of a song, we snatch the staves. Charm me a Muse from her seat amid the stars, or Alexander Smith from out of his poetic ragshop. Prancing Corybants with our tinkling cups;—Roarers all, briskly to it!

During this chorus a strangely-got-up Isaac of York strikes in at the wrong time with an old trombone, whose whines and groans would startle into disapproval and therefore into *neighing* a whole stableful of nightmares.

Vision of a Storied Masque.

Blow the trumpet, beat the drum,
There are knights and squires to come;
Harpers, sharpers, masquers, all
Bidden to our Festival!

Heigh tum lory—rory—tory.

Lombard rhymer, Titan climber,
Basque brunette, *carillon* chimer.
Monks and nuns, Keans, Buckstones, Bunns,
Mothers, daughters, fathers, sons,

ONE OF THE THIRTY.

Plays, delays, and means and ways,
Ships in docks and ships in "stays,"
Poets, no wits, slow wits, all
Bidden to our Festival!

Refrain—Blow the trumpet.

Norman minstrel, books fenestral,
Tropes bran new, and lays ancestral,
Lapland witches, brooms and breeches,
Sculptured heroes stript from niches,
Russian Strelitz, paper pellets,
Caliphs, bailiffs, cads and prelates,
Brokers, stokers, jokers, all
Bidden to our Festival!

Refrain—Blow the trumpet.

Troubadours and gay *jongleurs*,
Border chiefs and French *trouveurs*,
Débardeurs and "Northern Wizard"—
Anderson's "press-grinding" gizzard—
Penny-liners, puffs and gagging,
(Rolls of notes to put his bag in,)
London-mobbers, snobs and snobbers,
Jobbers, robbers, hobber-nobbers,
Natives, caitiffs,—one and all
Bidden to our Festival!

Refrain—Blow the trumpet.

Gascon story; grim and gory,
Polish martyr, (crown'd with glory,)
Gentle Judy—Punch's *sposa*—
Sheaves of leaves from Vallambrosa,
Fabliaux and *romanciers*,
Scowling, growling cavaliers,
Skaters, traitors, one and all
Bidden to our Festival!

Refrain—Blow the trumpet.

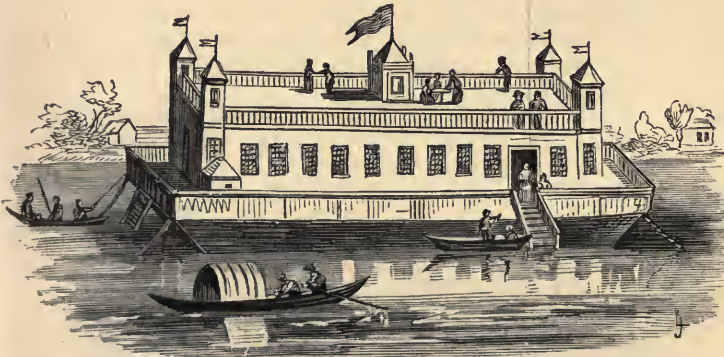
Swabian epic, Swedish *saga*,
Hospodar, Duke, Dervish, Aga,
Pilgrims, priests, and knights Teutonic,
Magnates of the craft masonic;

How they bluster, how they cluster,
Mars and Venus, what a muster!
Ramping, stamping, tramping all
To our glorious Festival!

Refrain—Blow the trumpet.

Jew Pedlar. Spectacles, nose-rings, and crescent-embroidered slippers. With *honi soit qui mal y pense* worked in worsted. Pipes and pistols. Horse-shoes, carving-forks, and glass eyes. And a Tartar's skull for a dice-box, with the loose teeth to rattle in it.

Old Woman of Banbury Cross to the Pretender. See me jingle the "rings on my fingers and bells on my



The "Folly" on the Thames—wherein great *Bals Masques* were given in the middle of the past century.

toes!" Look you! Yonder comes the "gallant Satan" with his red cloak on and his red-hot eyeglass.

Susan Hopley. 'Tis a sight I have longed to see. Where is the gracious Beelzebub? Where is the Black Satan?

Old Woman of Banbury Cross to Yankee Doodle. I know *him*. That is Tall Dick the Horsedealer, of Goswell-street Road. He owns five betting-offices and a rat-trap. I got my "cockhorse" from him, and the rings on my fingers from A——'s in Oxford-street.

The Pretender. Out of pawn, I suppose; like my father's crown of England pledged to Louis of France.

Ignatius Loyola comes forward and speaks to a Publisher in a green buckram gown with his card upon it. Leave that Shepherdess with her "books in the running brooks." Come with me into the Refreshment Room. I want to talk to you about a real book.

Publisher. Burn the book! and all the books in the world! Just now I say so, like Caliph Omar! Why annoy me, fool, when you see me so pleasantly flirting?

Ignatius Loyola. That is the very reason. I am malicious. But come into this corner. I have something to show you. *Beckons Beelzebub, who with anxiety has been watching them, but has hung back.* A volume of in-edited memoirs. Allow me to present the author. Mr. Muddles the well-known publisher; Beelzebub. *They bow.* There is plenty of fire in the book, Mr. Muddles, I assure you.

Publisher. I have no doubt of it, sir, coming from such a quarter. But now we are in our nook "mumble" your charms, if you have any.

*Ignatius Loyola to Ainsworth's Dictionary.** Are we all friends?

Little Tom Horner stopping Ainsworth's Dictionary's mouth. Ay, and as secret as the conspirators in "Le Proscrit." That's "Ernani" in English. By the way, that's one of the Ballet Houris of the Opera in the Haymarket. Her name is Lavinia Skittles—her character to-night is Little Boy Blue—he that "blows up the horn," you know.

Ainsworth's Dictionary. Speak to her.

Little Tom Horner. That I will *not*. For I am a married man, and my wife is "in the boxes." But we came to talk of a book, I believe. Conjure! somebody comes. Books are bores, I know.

German Student. Ah, a footstep into our secret haunt. Faces avault! We would be dark.

Bird-Fancier. It is a griffin hopped out of the cage of some enchanter. I can see the snapped wires in his fiery beak.

* "Historical."

Jack Sprat. It is a faëry knight bursting out all over glamour, and glowing to damnation, like a coal, in the illuminated hollow of his own armour, forged in fairy-land.

Frankenstein. Aha! 'Tis an automaton sent up (striding awful) out of the workshop of some mechanic Magus. Knock out its brass heart!

Intruder. Want any champagne or ice, gentlemen, or a card of the dances?

Jack Sprat. No. Get you gone for an impertinent *Bal Masqué* waiter. (Your pardon, Scaramouche, this chair is taken.) Come, gentlemen. After our talk we will have some wine, and a grand private *stampedo* of



An old battered helmet 'come a-masquerading'—with wounds from the wars;—whether real or festive. Evidently a debauched old headpiece.

our own to this fresh outburst. Look at the magnificent Jullien! See how he strips to the new musical charge! Whips off his jacket to reef this "sail."

The music strikes up. The dance and its roar recommence. A snug saltatory Tomfoolery is executed in a corner by Jack Sprat, Magog, Mephistophiles, Little Tom Horner, Little Boy Blue, a dashing Female Zouave and other "pretty objects."

Little Tom Horner. Do we not all describe something either with our feet or with our pens? Start into the dance, then, to this "Story-Telling" 'Trab' again of

Robert Bell—eldest son of Apollo. Bind the lightning about your feet—new Mercuries—to skip out your figures of flame.

They dance an extravagant Quadrille to the following Chorus—the people gathering round in curiosity and all laughing:—

Chorus.

Let History pipe her eyes,
 Nebulous, interstellar!
 The truest of histories
 Are those of the foolishest teller.
 Hey fol de rol de *di*,
 Rackety divo jig,
 Niebuhr himself would look shy
 In a masquerader's wig!

Let Poetry dance the hays;
 For though none else excel her,
 She owns her immortal bays
 To the wit of the masquerader.
 Hey fol de rol de *do*,
 Rackety divo jig,
 Petrarch would look like a crow
 In a droll Bal-Masqué wig.

Let Painting shoulder her brush,
 Who cares for Cuypp or Kneller?
 Thousands prance out at a rush
 At the scream of the masquerader.
 Hey fol de rol de *dum*,
 Rackety divo jig,
 Rubens would look very glum
 In a masquerading wig.

Let Music give up the ghost,
 Or fiddle as we compel her:
 Hurrah! here's demonstrative boast
 In the legs of the masquerader.
 Hey fol de *di do dum*,
 Rackety divo jig,
 Costa would look like his drum
 Come out in the masquer's rig.

The Dance ceases. All sink exhausted on the floor after their exertion. The white flappers of the Scaramouches draggle. Faces are seen through the cloud of chalk worn up into a map of the world of all imaginable wrinkles. Some sink with the severity of the exercise.

Magog. Now that like a veritable India-Rubber Indestructible, or Bounding Brother, I am "on three chairs," we will talk of literary matters. Where is the Author of "One of the Thirty?" Where is this wild child who writes about masques?

An Author coming forward in a "composed" manner. Here, sir!

Magog. "Something" like King John "I had to say." But—hush! Do you know this gentleman, Jack Sprat? *Points with his elbow to an Unknown seen spying suspiciously upon them.*

Jack Sprat. Eh bless us! Do you mean this Magnificent Dervise with his white turban, and stupendous beard? Save you, great sir! Eighteen hundred volumes of paper, with something upon it called "Season's Novels." Build we up with them the steps of a throne for you, sir! It is the celebrated——

Little Tom Horner. You startle. He looks not after all so very terrible. These princedoms and dominations of the publishing world are misrepresented. We are coming out ourselves, sir, soon. *To N. B.* And we hope there is nothing to prevent good fellowship with us. There is a murmur in our depths as of something seeking daylight.

Distinguished Magazine Contributor whispers to Jack Nokes. How about your perilous ascent of Primrose-hill?

Jack Nokes. Rejected, sir. Because they said there was something in it that touched the "Perambulation of a Back Parlour," and the "Old, Old Story."

Tom Styles. Mr. "N. B.," glad to make your acquaintance, sir! Which I hope will turn to profit. Will you accept a *hookah*? And will you take a seat on this long bench with some friends? Where we can smoke and look out on this "world of a masquerade," or this "masquerade of a world"—whichever you please.

The Dervise. Have with you, sir! But you must first permit me to roll up and to take off my beard, which might be else in the way. The villain of a barber put too much of a sweep of hair in it. But I am not too grave for fun. Let me fold up my beard nevertheless, and sit upon it sideways for a cushion. But I hope that I am free from the intrusion of all "newspaper-people," and from authors with their last quarter's rent unpaid. Otherwise, need I tell you that I shall sit on thorns, because I like to see the literary tribe in order?

The Author in a Composed Manner. Oh, do not disturb yourself, Mr. Celebrated N. B. You are safe from "newspaper-people;" for the printers, by this time, are setting up the contributors' work, and the writers follow their "leaders." And though authors, with "quarters' rents," the rents are fortunately not on our own personal quarters; and though authors (and therefore writers of books, and though I say it to a rich publisher), we have some "receipts."

N. B. And when you have no receipts you have your talk, sir. Do not be impudent; or otherwise I shall put my face into my circle of a beard and I shall go away offended.

Little Tom Horner. I meant no offence, sir; in my remarks. Let us listen to this new quadrille—"Crack 'em and Try 'em:" which—to speak slang or slipshod—they say is a "stunner." If that vulgar language called "slang" should be permissible even at a masquerade ball. Shall I venture on a mild form of it?—begging your pardon all the while.

Little Tom Horner resumes. Mr. "N. B.," this is a distinguished Author; famous as yet for little except (in common with Magog) a pretty considerable amount of exertion to-night in the dance way. You see we relieve ourselves occasionally of our weight of thought.

Mr. N. B. I do indeed see it, sir. You authors amuse yourselves in curious ways. But understanding that Messrs. Gog and Magog intend getting up a General Burlesque Association—with branches in all the various principal towns—for freeing us of the dismal weight of the ancient literature and so forth, and superseding our

own English standard authors with something newer, *faster*, funnier, cheaper—and I was going to add another word——

Little Tom Horner. Don't add it then. We are gentlemen—I mean *gents*.

Mr. N. B. Well, money, not manners, is the thing now-a-days! But never mind. Here are some cards which I was commissioned to present to you.

Little Tom Horner. We are very happy of assistance in this our "Company for the Universal Putting Down of Serious Things." There are many at it, indeed! All the world's a joke. We are jokes, ourselves, on our Momus of a planet. The first card. *Bien!—ver' good!* as the Frenchman says. Mr. ——, the Mountain Showman, with his lantern wherewith to see the stars, and his panoramic views of the world, and his piano-accompaniments to the "crack of doom." Mr. —— is very clever. This hitherto unattempted stupendous——

Mr. N. B. You are rude, sir. Distress me not. Mr. A—— S—— with his China plate——

Jack Sprat. Is a very clever man—of that there is no dispute—with just sufficient poetic gentism and fast fun to suit the London pavements and the walkers thereon. But nature is not Punch, sir. There is something yet in her mighty heart. The boast of our Piccadilly Humboldt is, sir, that of having brought down Mont Blanc to every man's hearth; the having reduced it to the level of those capacities which could not rise to it. The "Monarch of Mountains" is now too familiar to be Monarch any longer. The corrugated *terrors* of the mountain are smoothed-out of it like any ironed-out civilised pocket-handkerchief. At our very domestic and family fireside the mountain hath sputtered its magnificence. It has flustered and fidgeted like any eight ounces of Fifth of November gunpowder. Our children gather round it and peer over the old bald head of it. Its avalanche thunders are as the dropping of the shillings into the E—— Hall till. Nature hath intervals in her periods of show. But the mountain in her new Merlin's hands—always conjuring—hath

none. In stripping it of its terrors—like an old woman who looks but witch-like in her nightcap, but who is a very respectable grandmother for all that—in going up and down it in the spirit of a Kensington florist, or of an auctioneer—in the real drawing-room sense treading up its ice into *ices*, and spangling it so gaily up that the very eternal stars which hung over it as lamps to the prodigious altar which it constitutes, know it no longer; in doing all this, our A—— hath done that for the Mountain which was quite beyond its own power to do for itself—to make itself small. Familiarity breeds contempt. A king upon his throne is not to be shaken hands with. One must be sparing of one's frights. Jupiter's thunderbolts would become as the very slowest tinderbox were he always striking light.

Magog. "Mountains have fallen,
Leaving a gap in the clouds, and with the shock
Startling their Alpine brethren."

"My pious brethren, ye scared peasantry," Mont Blanc is now a great natural show with its tickets. The caverns are private boxes; its ice-clefts are stalls; its slabbed platforms are as the gallery bench, however cold to sit upon. And its air-hung giddy juts—where are the astonished eagles—are as the advantageous places from which you can command the whole view—including the terror. Time and Sand have done something for the marbles of Egypt. But in regard to Mont Blanc, A—— S—— hath done more. His (we mean Mont Blanc's) majestic head and his hitherto untrodden snows have been profaned and spoiled by civilisation—have been melted up into monotony. Boast no longer of thine unconquerable top, O thou matchless Mountain! for the Egyptian Albert hath been up thee. Thou hast sunk at his word, theatrically, as through a stage-trap. And we now look *down*, as upon sawdust and gaspipes, where we formerly looked *up* at heaven's immortal clouds and at the mighty leagues of untrampled snow. Thy frights are now—Piccadilly frights. But the truth is that Mont Blanc being high—as also Primrose Hill—and remembering that he had to astonish the Londoners, Mr. A—— S—— (in balancing their relative advan-

tages for his purpose) not unnaturally chose the former. This as being less near home.

Little Tom Horner. There is some truth in what you say. My own opinion of Mont Blanc is not so high. I never did really think it so grand. These things are exaggerated; even mountains are made too much of.

Mephistophiles. Sir, in these days we ought not to think *anything* astonishing. We are too great a people



The first original great street-advertiser.

to estimate anything as large. Belief is quite a matter of the time of life. Both of men and of nations. Sydney Smith remarks that "as far as accords with his observation, women towards the age of forty get tired of being virtuous, and men of being honest."

Jack Nokes. But Mr. Sprat. And Magog. In regard to some of the heroes of the time you are not quite fair.

Mr. A—— S—— is a very able man, who has made himself a fortune; and is, I say, a clever man.

Jack Sprat. Far be it from me to question his talents. I honour a man with sovereigns in his pocket: and wit in his head at the same time. But “is it not a lamentable thing, grandsire, that we should be thus afflicted with strange flies, these fashion-mongers, these *pardonnez mois?*” Have we had not enough of Tomfooleries?—including the “Uncle Tomfoolery?” Have we not done yet with “Bruising our Oats?” With Paletots and puffs about Pocket Siphonias, Kalydors and Curries? Shall we have more of “Six Shirts for Six Shillings,” of advice as to “What we should do When We Marry?” What with Patent Bedding and Child’s (or Prince ——) Night Lights, with Standard of Natural Sherry, and British Brandy; Alpaca and Galvanic Chains; Impilia Boots, and Resilient Coats; Talmas, and Best Britannia Metal Teapots; Islington Pills; Old Jenkins’ Life Preservers; Sudden Death Insurance Offices, and Joint Stock Companies—what with all this din we are going mad! “Oh for breath to utter!” Is it not traitorous; is it not barbarous murder so to let us have no rest? To inundate us with circulars in the house, bills in the streets, and crazing whole-page advertisements in the daily papers? Is the world to be nothing but selling and buying? And is life to be made a continual race round the Equator between the man who has got money in his pocket, and the other man who is after him and wants it? Surely this great world has something in it better than all this rubbish. Each man bawls above his neighbour. And thou Mr. Alb!—thou of that time-honoured literary street of Mur!—Thy lines of capitals in the *Times* and thy very high-class books have become as perfect bores; hornets of “iteration,” mere nuisances. Man has got a heart. And notwithstanding our David Brewsters and Dionysius Lardners, man is not yet altogether great brass watchwork or an ape. And oh, Mr. Ottoman Lay-stall. Who art going to convert the Grand Seignor to finance. Thou who paradest about the highways thy Bulls of Bashan—otherwise of Nineveh. Thou hast made

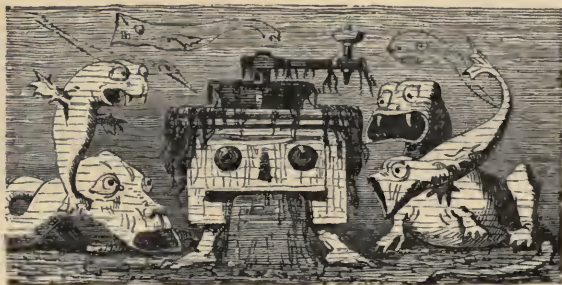
the Biblical Sennacherib — whom we were disposed otherwise to think something of—only a mahogany-faced Moonshee with the board at his back. We are bold enough to question, indeed, whether there has not been some stupendous mistake made about these so infallibly assumed Assyrian remains. And whether they are not the architectural *débris*—recovered out of sand—of some mere Egyptian Manchester. They seem to stand convicted of some such sublimely learned misacceptance having been made about them. The eager mind of the antiquary, hungering for the anticipated applause of the Royal Institution, has perhaps met these famous cuneiform inscriptions half way. Such lifelong mistakes are known in archæological and other story. Note, too, the few Thoughts in our teeming crop of—so-called—*popular* literature! Consider—with all his London truth—the platitudes, pleonasms; and that “damn’d iteration” of Charles Dickens; whom we otherwise honour as *undoubtedly* a man of genius. He is, however, the natural historian and uncontested Prince only of the Literary Babyland: if men will consent to grow backwards and creep out of the cradle again as old babies. Glance at the inundation of twaddle of *lady-writers*; with their inoffensive didactics, their bran-new physico-religious moral muddles and “pincushion” crudities. Good heavens, are we ceasing to be men? Is all this “literature?” And “poetry”—Great name! Call you “poetry” the spangles and ribbon-ends, the pieced metaphors, artificial sentimentalism and mawkish and maudlin *croonings* of the modern school of it? With Tennyson and Tupper and half-a-dozen rhapsodic mooning and moaning, whining and pining clergymen in this country, and Oldfellow or Longfellow, and Peter and Paul and Poe (he of the Raven), in the United States as the leaders and princes of poetry; as the example-givers, exponents and originators of it. “A plague on all these fantasticoes,” say I—heartily.

“Oh for an hour of blind old Dandolo!”

Oh for *ten minutes* of Glorious Milton! he whose church-tunes come over us like the sublime organ-swell; he

whose poetry literally commands the "Invisible Rulers." Give us this noble old blind man, with his reverend tresses, his intellectually-imperial brows, and his grand, king-like ; his manly English !

Tom Styles. Why, man, you are in a rage ; if not drunk with the blood of "Old Grapes." Who ever heard such nonsense ? To talk thus in these days ! And at a *Bal Masqué* of Jullien's, of all places in the world ! Cannot you take the world (as a comfortable man) as the world ; and be satisfied ? Must you come over us and make us wretched with this rhapsodical, conceited stuff and nonsense ; abusing everybody, and doing yourself untold-of mischief ; making free with "established reputations," and great facts ? Do you mean to tell us that



"UGGERYTHRUMS ;"

OR

Shapes of an ugly dream which set in upon a bewildered simpleton, after a "night of it;" and a champagne supper (at the cost of five-guinéas-and-a-half) at a great *Bal Masqué*.

it is possible that the world can make such huge mistakes ? Contradicting such things beyond question, and only exposing yourself to the charge of envy. Oh pray do not be so foolish, Jack Sprat—*my friend* Jack Sprat ; as I am disposed to call you sometimes. It all comes, I am fully assured, from your historical disrelish of that "fat" of this world. Pray be convinced that you will never rise in the world if you come out so maliciously, and so absurdly with these snarls and jeers at established greatness, and at fixed truths ; because you will only get laughed at, or, what is worse, avoided by all right-thinking, prudent, well-bred people.

Jack Sprat. Well, I “*sit* corrected.” I have truly suspected that. I must be a fool for very many years; and I will turn courtly and flattering; and then some of these repining, complaining ideas of what is right (and of what is wrong) will depart out of my stupid head. Beg pardon for me of every person of whom I have spoken rudely. Say that it happened when I really knew not better; sitting here like a mope and a muddler, and a real fool.

The greater part of the group who held this absurdly virtuous and delicate, but at last corrected disquisition upon men and things, now dispersed. I, indeed, thought of going home. The light began to weary me, and the noise to distract. But, in a little while such dreadful events occurred as will always render this last night spent within Covent Garden Theatre the most frightful in my varied and (in so many respects) instructive life.

I beg the reader will not take offence at me for some of the rude things which I have said concerning many great people; whom I have no doubt I do not understand. And at the same time it is only fabulous talk which I have put in the mouths of my characters, in a place which fell into cinders and dust; and therefore my talk must be taken as not meant.

I fear that my readers will be scarcely prepared to believe the extraordinary events of my history when they come to penetrate to the last of my tale. I might very well indeed exclaim, (and indeed so doubtless will my friend of either sex who shall happen to continue to the close of the present book)—

“ Can such things be,
And overcome us, like a summer’s cloud,
Without our special wonder ?”

Listen! Whilst I stood quiet and thoughtful in a comparatively obscure nook of this celebrated *salle*, lighted grandly up as it was, and blazing in the effulgence of innumerable chandeliers, a strange-looking figure—showing as real of them as if he had come out of the streets instead of forming one of the mere crowd of masquers—disengaged himself from the press, and

evidently in an exhausted, pale, yet very excited state staggered, rather than walked, to a column. A tame Pierrot cleared away frightened from before him.

I could not cease looking at him; he was so very strange of appearance. He was an old man, dressed in an ancient drab great-coat. His hair, which was abundant, was as white as snow. His face was of the colour of parchment, and was marked, like a map, with innumerable wrinkles. His beard was long; his teeth were firmly set; and so lowering were his shaggy, penthouse eyebrows, that I saw nothing of his eyes but an occasional spark, which, when he caught your eye, made you tingle all over.

I drew nearer to this strange old man. His face seemed to change pale and red (old and young) by turns. And with clenched hands, struck occasionally shaking over his forehead, I heard him mutter—

“Twice only have I seen it. But O those times! A world has been shaken by it. And the horrors handed down to me as consisting with my grandfather’s experience; and those frights which drive me hither and thither day by day over the face of the world! A third time—this night—have I caught glimpse of that terrific Symbol;—warned by those, beyond measure, nameless hints—by that which challengeth reply not by things of this world, but by ghostly lookers over your shoulder. With sympathy alone with the Unutterable. Oh, that this should be the day!”

A young man, dressed splendidly as a Spanish *matador*, with his short, bright, double-edged sword stuck straight through his belt; and with the little *toro* cloak or cape, (bright red as a poppy to dazzle the supposed maddened bull) flung over his shoulder, swept by me with speed. He cast his dark eye backward over his scarlet cloak; and with a look of alarm, but at the same time of very excited aversion, if not of hate, he appeared to me to be bent upon avoiding somebody. Jullien’s orchestra went crashing on meanwhile; the chandeliers swung in the storm of a dance; the dust drove in a cloud. All seemed to reel about me in the polka.

From amidst a crowd all glitter and shifting colours,

and seemingly following with distressed anxiety (so far as I could judge from her attitude) the footsteps of the *matador* (the trace of whom I fancied this fascinating figure had momentarily lost), came a *débardeur*—one of the prettiest of that class of masqueraders I think I have ever seen! Slight, graceful, small-limbed, slim-waisted—the very embodiment of the gallant, the picturesque, and the enticing, with her abundant flowing hair superbly arranged, well thrown back, and white as wool with the powder appropriate to her costume; the face of this errant, provoking, masquerading damsel was beautiful, I would have sworn, under her little black mask, as that of a lost cherub. I caught a glimpse of her round dimpled cheek, and of a cleft rosebud for lips—red now, alas, in fierce anger evidently, or turning pale as the white lips of an almost infant marble Circe. I was struck dumb with the beauty of this magic figure.

She caught a sudden sight of the red cloak; and putting aside the vulgar, noisy, dancing crowd with her small white hands, but as if with resistless force—little as she was—she darted after the wearer. I followed her with eager speed. For at the side door (where I saw he purposed to baffle his fair pursuer amidst the lobbies, or by changing down or up from one of the circles of the boxes to another) the mask of this mimic *matador* fell off, and what was my astonishment—almost my terror—to recognise Scatterworth! Remembering his history; recalling that which his mother had told me about his having become enamoured with some girl of the theatre; and seeing the magic figure which followed, and whose whole pitiful story I could gather in a minute, I trembled for the consequences.

This was the net of mischief in which Raymond had evidently been caught.

An execration escaped the *matador's* writhing lip as he stooped and snatched up his mask. When he raised his head, Raymond's eyes suddenly caught mine; and through all the paint upon his face he looked terribly. As for myself, I had nothing to fear, and therefore I met his gaze calmly and fearlessly. He turned round, and made as if he would seek concealment back amidst

the crowd rather than by the way which he was at the moment taking ; and which I seemed, however falsely, as if I barred to him from the mere fact of seeing him.

But this interval of agitation had served to allow of the approach of the beautiful girl disguised as the *débardeur*. She laid her hand forcibly, and yet agitatedly, on the *matador's* arm ; and I could see that the grasp was—I was going to say—a “tumultuously-beseeching” one :—she almost throwing herself in his arms, as if to arrest his headlong flight. But he broke violently away from her, and dashed fiercely up the first small stairs which he saw accessible. After a moment's hesitation, I determined to follow. But the girl was quicker than I ; for she lightly mounted the stairs after him, reaching out as if to stop Raymond, and begging him to pause. He, however, repelled her, and rushed on.

The staircase was narrow, and had many turns ; besides, it was dingy, and looked exceedingly rickety and out of repair, all which sufficiently denoted to me that we were now in the private part of the theatre, and “behind the scenes,” as it is called ; the three of us mounting towards what are in the Theatre denominated “the flies,” or that strange division of a theatre where the machinery is worked, and where the scenery is changed and brought into play at night ; full of beams and ropes.

While I looked puzzled and put-out about me—quite uncertain where I was going, and fearing precipitation down some hole—a loose door burst jingling open to the right of the landing-place, and the same singular old man who had arrested my attention below was suddenly disclosed. But there was now a laugh on his face—seemingly of triumph—which was terrific to look at in its mischief. I absolutely averted my own face ; for the man looked a hoary Cain new branded, and come from I knew not whence.

“Here behold me again,” cried the stranger. “Once more amidst dangers—once more amidst portents. The sky reddens—the walls thrill ; though none are aware what enemies are mustering against this place. And thou, *Matador* ! Something awaits you, bad one ! And

something—though less terrific—in a short time awaits others, too, who little dream it. Dance on, ye mad crowd! fiery devils shall soon mingle amidst your waltzes. But who art thou?” he said, suddenly addressing me. “We know you not; you are not one of us. We have no need of an addition to the persons of this last scene of a drama too real for this place of mock history.”

“Ill-meaning mocker—thine own word—why dost thou dog my footsteps? And what *are* thy words? and what are they to me? What *shall* be they to me?” demanded Raymond fiercely of him. “Bar not my passage. I must hence; before that woman—whose footsteps I hear—as the hiss of a snake—treading fast upon my track—arrives to wind around me. I hate her! I want not vengeance; but I hate her!”

Raymond, during this interchange of most mysterious, but dreadful-sounding words, was essaying to force past the stranger, who had but his hands to prevent him. Raymond at last succeeded in passing him; and he had one foot upon the platform of that which I afterwards learnt was the “painting-room,” which extended its huge floor close beneath the top roof of the late Theatre Royal, Covent Garden. But the *débardeur* was quick also up the stairs. Her hair, in her eager speed (and in her agitation), had now escaped from its net, and in magnificent abundance it flowed over her shoulders. She darted by me. And climbing up, as it were, the winding air-hung staircase like a fanciful ship-boy, flushed with excitement and sense of beauty, in slippers and velvet trousers, she mounted as if the rigging of a tall, tempest-tossed maddest pirate-vessel, or dashingest man-of-war. Then her cap fell from her head, and it dropped at my feet; tumbling out a bundle of letters and her mask, from which came sudden perfume and a glorious flashing diamond ring. She was now struggling with Raymond for the purpose, apparently, of stopping him, and sobbing and shrieking over his shoulder all the while. I believe that he (to avoid her)—though I could surmise no reason for such madness—would have sought escape through the very skylights, one of which

I saw open; with the cold reproving stars shining chastely through. The whole scene struck me as dreadful. I wished myself fairly out of the Theatre, and in the quiet streets. I could have groaned with excitement and terror.

“O Raymond—Raymond! leave me not,” besought the poor girl, almost between crying and hysteric laughter. “Leave me not here, and now, in this horrid place. I am not guilty. I have not forgotten. Indeed, believe me,” she cried in a tone that went deep to my heart. “Believe your Rosa, that she has not forgotten!”

“Quit thy serpent-hold—deceiver—*woman!* Or I shall free myself by a rough process.”

“Ha, ha!” came up hoarsely from below. When I looked, the stranger was stamping furiously on the old stairs, and making them shake. Meanwhile I caught the roll and whirl and the thunder of the revelry from below, and the deadened *flashes*, as they seemed, of the *Bal Masqué* orchestra. The contrast was the most striking in the world. I had never been more impressed for good, in a cathedral; with the full service pealing.

“Wilt thou not quit? Then this shall free me——”

“Mercy! O my God!” I heard the girl shriek. And, glancing up, I saw real, bright, sharp steel shining in the hands of the masquerade *matador*. The *débardeur's* snowy shirt seen white and intermingled with the now writhing (for disentanglement)—I feared MURDERER—soon burst into crimson. And the poor girl—her face deathly pale, but she beautiful as a Parian Hebe—staggered and fell, step by step. She was caught up by my feet; her bosom streaming with blood, as she rolled down to me, clutching, to save herself, like a broken flower, and striking her head cruelly against the stairs. Hard as the world!

My breast was transfixed with horror. I stood an immovable image of anguish and pity, for a while, on the last turn short of this upper stage, on which this real great tragedy was enacted.

But my attention was diverted by new and more frightful circumstances. A small leather bag, at the same instant that this blow was given, was forced out

of the desperate young man's pocket; and amidst copper coin, slips of paper, and other things less important, a medal, token, or Piece of Silver (let the reader mark), flew forth with a spiteful hiss, and a *flash* as it seemed to a bystander. The Piece of Money struck the banister-rail fair, jingled down the stairs, and rolled into a corner, where it turned, for I saw it—marvellous to say—bottom upwards *some time* after it had rested! Something inextricably fixed my eyes to this apparent messenger of evil. A bright, long, arrowy spark shot from it in a while. Another spark succeeded. A third, still fiercer, glanced up like a flash of crooked lightning. I leant over as near as I dare. The thing was alive. Was suddenly struck red-hot—Blindingly white-hot, with an insupportable radiance like an angel's glory or a mimic star! It span round, and wore for itself a hole—a circle sharp as itself—in the dry boards. With the speed of light it sank through—flaming out from the edges like a sun—and it disappeared. Then instantly—but after a silence—there was a sort of alarm coursed through the theatre. *Fire* burst as from a fountain—whole trees of flame—in the theatre. And, ere I could remove my eyes from the astonishing or devilish apparent changing things about me, I heard the terrific alarm—how awful in such a place!—"FIRE! FIRE!"

A scream—a distant yell—mingled with trampling feet; hurrying feet came from below. There was a rush hither and thither as of many people. The shrill outcry of "Fire!" leaped from side to side. The whole place and its accompaniments had an effect of nameless horror. The thought that I was so high—overlooking the possible future gulf of fire—almost maddened me. Ejaculations of frantic alarm mounted to me from below in that minute of statue-like terror during which I stood. Noises raged through the edifice. Looking up, in an almost impossibly brief space of time I saw a dome—a whole hemisphere, as it were, of new and dreadful lights begin to close, magnificently centring over me. Giant ribbons of flame—for that is the word wherewith to express—came driving and flut-

tering vertically, like mighty streamers, or flags Cyclopean. Waving like fierce, fiery plumes, or like victorious giant palms to celebrate the crowning (in his own white-hot temple) of the Genius of Conflagration. These belts of fire mounted, and met as if springing from the rim of the huge burning *Coliseo*. With a maddening dâzzle, and an intolerable heat, grew and intensified this, ah, far too fiery floral show! This whole tropical wilderness of a circle of treelike, amphitheatrical fires. It burnt redly like a forest under the Line. Greatly, grandly, like the Palace of Nero.

"Fire! Fire!" was repeated by a hundred voices. "Fire! Fire!" rang everywhere. One would have thought a real battle was raging with the red hosts of the element of Fire, in which their magic jewels were struck shivering as the sparks. A sound as of mighty winds (and those that ride them) came sweeping from a distance. There were reports, soon, as if of a military fusillade, rising and falling. Then came heavy discharges; of whole batteries—flying or field batteries of cannon seemingly; to speak the language of soldiers. There was no time for thought or plan on the part of those who might have sought to combat the fire. The flames spread faster. Already was the Theatre in a bright glow. Not a moment was to be lost, if I sought life; because the fate of the Theatre was fixed.

And I sought rescue—at that dreadful moment—not only for myself, but for others! Others may abandon thee; I will not abandon thee to this cruel fate, thou poor stricken one! All the more appealing to a true man's protection for that mockery of a mad dress. Something like this rushed through my bewildered brain—fixed my dizzy sight. I caught that unfortunate and blighted flower; to be snatched as out of the jaws of a volcano; and raised her high in my arms. Beautiful did she look in them as she fell again—to all appearance dead—into their embrace. Like a lily, with a series of crimson spots traced adown its snowy upturned petals, did her bosom droop pliant over my shaking shoulder. I was lost—excited—mad! I kissed her again and again—wept almost childish tears; and

in that wild moment I swore to save her or to perish. In fact, I had half fallen in love in a moment with a wild woman in the jaws of fire. Strange union!

The flames pursued me. Floors seem to fall under me. Wreaths of white smoke, with here and there a snake of flame to do his deadly work, crept fast from under the *proscenium* into the body of the Theatre. The fiercer fiery ensigns were now thick in front of the glowing battalion of the destroyer Conflagration. Already the rush of air had fanned the fire into brightest life, and into a rolling spectacular energy that defied resistance. Showers of sparks—projected as fireworks; flames snatched from hand to hand as if the loosened devils of fire were rallying really here at their dreadful work as the fiercest point for them now on the face of the whole earth; falling beams as if of the trees from overhead of a flaming forest: this mingled confusion of sights and sounds raised indeed a tremendous carnival, whose emblems and flags were of the imperial fires of a lucent Pandemonium. The Theatre (blazing within its four hollow walls) was now as the castle of that bright gold Domination in which the ministers of Ahriman held fullest revel; preparatory to the coming of their Prince, whose presence is completed ruin and face altogether ashes. To it the forces of fire seemed to rush as from the uttermost parts of the earth. This was indeed—at the moment of fiery conquest—fit palace for Beelzebub or Belial—princedoms of hell in the extent of Imperial Fire's destruction.

Intense heat soon burned up all the woodwork of the Theatre—melted the metal, which in places ran like dazzling molten silver:—and almost reduced the stone to powder in the deep interior of the late glorious, but the now so utterly ruined Theatre. It was a building rendered wholly up to fire as its freehold. Well might the demolition of this great Theatre startle all London. The horrors of a crimson sky, and of a succession of still more furious fiery hailstorms—of rained fire as if through the opened windows of God's sky; this seemed in these later days repeated over the gilt civilisation, and lewd hypocrisies, and painted plati-

tudes—the sins (if the severer reader should so choose) and the dreadful misdoings—of the new Babylon. This, our recusant and religiously-forgetful London, occupied only with itself and with its sins.

Without the burning Theatre—early as the hour was—there were masses and masses of people. The conflagration was a metropolitan beacon and a grand carnival of fire. The burning was a mob festival. The church spires, all through the frightened town, shone as single trees of fire. The monster dome, cup-like and Cyclopean, of St. Paul's glowed dusk as a Pantheon of a half-light. It almost looked as a dropped globe from out the inflamed sky; cooling down as a fallen star from its hot, copper-like glories. All along the Surrey hills there was a reflected belt of light in which the houses shone as in a panorama. The central great fire burned as a middle altar in a prodigious fiery amphitheatre of torchlights. Waterloo Bridge and Wellington Street flashed back to the glance as a defile out of the burning Moscow. At about half-past five o'clock with thundering crashes the roof of the enormous building fell in. Its fall was the signal for the universal quiver of the shaken flambeaux, as which all the church spires showed. It was the monumental completion of this total and so sudden ruin of a great place; dead, into the void.

And such was the flaming end of the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden:—a Theatre so signalised in our musical remembrance; and so abounding in all that was beautiful, costly, and rare in art, and so significant of pleasant nights, of high delights, and of unmatched instruction of its kind. On the eventful morning of Wednesday, the 5th of March, 1856, all this devastation met its food.

I had saved myself out of the fiery furnace of the Theatre, and I bore my memories of my night's work. And I had saved another. I had redeemed my promise made to myself at a moment when, to judge from appearances, I had but the *slightest* chance of escape, and of being able to triumph; not only thus in my resolution, but in the so complete and happy fulfilment of it:—at

least so far as that poor, beautiful young creature, that young, lovely, lithe, graceful girl was concerned ; and her extrication.

And I got me home, and sat me down and cried. For believe me (disdainful reader) I am serious now when I declare that I say my prayers sometimes crying. I am so lost to reason, and so (in modern ideas) truly stupid and unphilosophical as to believe that (blind worm as I am) there is a real, personal God who can both see me on my knees and hear me. And that is childlike and therefore ridiculous in this Neo-Platonic and Neo-Christianised (or non-Christianised) age :— when men really seem as if they lived by themselves in the world ; and when we *know* that they have more than half forgotten God.



Ruins after a fire.



BOOK THE THIRD.

INLAND REVENUE OFFICE, SOMERSET HOUSE.

TIME—1856.

SOME months now elapsed after the burning of the Theatre.

I know the porter at the Office of the Inland Revenue Department at Somerset House.

I have always a latent disposition to cultivate acquaintance with this class of business men, being sufficiently a person of the world to know that in frequent instances they hold the keys of the office to which they belong, in two useful senses. Your big, loud-speaking or soft-speaking great man in a Government or a public office (and in many a private one too), from the number of things and of incidental matters which the porter has seen of him and of others, stands in no small awe of the plain coloured-coated official who in that dingy-looking arm-chair or Jesuitical confessional or Cromwellian watch-box dispenses answers, catches up the suspicious on entering, blandly unbends to the very polite to him, and muses in his spare time—of which he has much—upon his own Janitor-like majesty, and compelled external isolation. Ins-and-outs, dog-barking, and the mutability of things—including Directors' of private companies carriages and Chief Clerks' of public offices wives—these things amuse him.

Many a good turn have these acute and honest and very frequently clever porters done me. There is many an Office which has all its wisdom and no small share of its rectitude too, as far as the pocket is concerned, at its street-door. Reader, make these plain, but good,

if conceited people your friend ; if your business lie that way—be you a man of affairs, or of none. Be not too proud to do it. You are not so very great a man ;—at least you cannot be too great to be a good fellow, and sociable. And if you can be civil in the hall, you will very often find your business prosper all the better for it even in carpeted office-parlours, and behind important public office mahogany rail-partitions. Every office—public or private—is a little fortress, which it requires “gunpowder”—by which we mean politeness, if not flattery—to reduce. Every office and place of the kind is a little monarchy which has its cabinet in the inner part, and has the “court of guard” under the portico. The telegraph works—unseen the wires—very surely in your favour or disfavour, from the exterior to the interior. Affability greases the wires, the wheels or medium of communication—mollifies rust—with most efficacious fat or solvent ; and politeness frequently does that which nothing else will do—obtain you your point. For we all want our points—blunt points or sharp points.

One evening in summer—it was after office hours at Somerset House—I was bound for the railway beyond Waterloo Bridge ; and I bore in my hand a small green carpet-bag, with new fawn-coloured leather mounting and brilliantly neat stitching, all marking the thing as nearly new, if not quite new. I had a few necessaries in this bag ; and I was about to make a short journey. As I was passing along the Strand, and as my business in the place in the country principally referred to a matter which was in anxious negotiation with the office-people of Somerset House ; and as I had a few points to arrive at the truth concerning which I knew my friend, Mr. Michael Kennedy, was very well able himself to resolve to me, I turned short out of the bustle of the Strand in under the porticoes of this architectural stronghold. Now in this palace of official foolscap and Government tape I sought the kindly Cerberus.

I found Mr. Kennedy in his usual place. But he had a relieved, and—for the porter of a Government Office—a somewhat jovial—nay, a jaunty air even. He was

condescending; verily communicative. Like the grave clerk or beadle of a stately Wesleyan meeting-house or chapel mayhap, when the congregation is going out, and the doors are about being shut. He was now king in his vacant kingdom of stone-passages and of swinging brass-plated doors—the Alexander Selkirk of Somerset House—more than “monarch of all he surveyed”—solitary, free of hand, unbent.

His daughter—a modest, plainly-dressed young girl, an apprentice to a milliner in the city—was leaving him just as I stepped into the stone-hall. And Mr. Kennedy asked me into the Clerks’ Room with some parting but complacent charge to Martha, his daughter, on his—at this season of relief—actually nearly three-parts open lips; with brow even bland.

I stepped into the Clerks’ Room, maintaining conversation meanwhile with Mr. Kennedy, and with my carpet-bag forgotten in my hand. There was the exact counterpart of my carpet-bag—it must have been purchased at the same shop—standing (and about as full), in a chair at the side of the door, as if placed there by some clerk temporarily delayed and not far off; and as if for instant taking-up just as I might take up on going again. How odd I thought it; looking at the bag in my hand, and at the other bag! I seemed to see double bags, by a sort of bag-fatality. I seemed to be dreaming, and to see No. 1 Bag and No. 2 Bag as the same.

“Dear me!” I ejaculated, interrupting myself to attend to these two absurd bags. I cast a sidelong, accidental glance, as it were, at the bag in the chair in the full heat and hurry (notwithstanding) of my talk. “I could have sworn that that bag was mine, had I not my own in my hand.” I then forgot all about both bags.

“That bag belongs to a gentleman here—I mean in our office. At least I think it does. For I have seen one like it in the hand of one of our clerks,” said Mr. Kennedy. “Some one has left it for a short while there for me to take care of, I suppose. Singular! It’s exactly like yours.”

I became forgetful of other things in my business-talk with Mr. Kennedy. And as we sat down for a few

minutes in a couple of chairs which happened to be placed there, standing together very conveniently and invitingly in the window—in an attempt of mine to expound something which I wanted clearly to be placed before the heads of the Office of which I esteemed Mr. Kennedy to be the so worthy and the favourite agent, to rid me of its encumbrance, I for a moment laid down my bag in the chair. There was some difficulty in making my usually clear-sighted friend Kennedy see exactly in the way I wanted. And as I was about to quit, and was talking on towards the door, in the full preoccupation of my subject, I pulled out my watch with an impatient snatch; and, lo!—I found it to be within just ten minutes of the time of the starting of the train! Actually a chance of being left behind!

I was like lightning. I was away in a moment. I called out a “good-bye,” plunged back for a shake of the hand with Kennedy, snatched up my bag, and was in the Strand before you could look behind a door. I hailed a cab, jumped in, and away we went at a hand-gallop—I sitting as it were on thorns instead of on a cushion, and fretting at every little demur which delayed my steed, my cab, and me.

Something that sadly put me out soon occurred. In the Strand, all in the crowd (but I should have known him amidst a thousand), I caught a glimpse of that horrid man—now made respectable, as far as his outside went—who followed my unfortunate, but I fear guilty friend up the stairs into the painting-room of Covent Garden Theatre on that terrific night of the burning of the house.

I felt unwell and nervous in a moment. But all was too great a whirl of hurry with me just now.

And now mark what came. This happened from my unfortunate mistake in that Clerks’ Room at Somerset House. I have hated the sight of carpet-bags ever since. I recall terribly that unlucky time when I took the wrong bag.

The reader shall judge my feelings—being so particular a man in all my little arrangements—when I tell him that it was not until I quitted the train, actually

at the Chertsey Station of the South-Western Railway, that in lifting my bag to walk down to the houses there about the river (but I was not going to toss it in) —I found that I must have made a mistake; for the carpet-bag in my hand, though mine undoubtedly as far as appearance went and as I believed, was certainly *not mine*; at least not the one with which I had started.

This was an alarming discovery, not only on my own account, but on that of the real owner; who I concluded must be the unknown gentleman of the Inland Revenue Office referred to by Kennedy—spite of his doubt about him. However, there was no help for it now. So I quietly walked on, and at my friend's house at Chertsey—at the place whereto, in fact, I was bound—I submitted the bag to private examination. It was very singular, but my key opened it. This, after a slight effort.

Some shirts, a white waistcoat, half-a-dozen pocket-handkerchiefs, a bottle of scent, some Windsor soap, and a large folded manuscript, with a seal in the corner and tied neatly with green ribbon, were extracted from this unfortunate travelling-bag, mistaken mine. I replaced all the contents but the manuscript. And that I took the liberty of looking into.

I found it a most extraordinary manuscript. It affected me singularly and absurdly, in some respects, from my own private recollections. I could not for a long time disabuse my mind of those ideas, and the remarkable impressions I gained out of it. In the next section I shall give the narrative in its one-half introductory portion, and I shall conclude it in a succeeding section. The revelations will doubtless surprise the reader to the same extent that they *startled* me.

In justice to myself I must say that though I advertised the green bag as widely as my means afforded, and though I sought information of Kennedy, who had supposed it to belong to some clerk in his office—but which surmise, on application to the person, proved erroneous:—still will I add that though I used the utmost exertions to discover the owner of this mysterious green bag (and I do also so at times even up to this

date), I have never yet succeeded in tracing anybody.

Some matters in the bag astonished me when I first turned it out. I could not understand the contents. I doubted whether I was really in London of 1856. For instance, there were five large gold pieces of money of an unknown, but certainly of British coinage; for I recognised the lions. Can any of my readers assist me? For I am not by any means desirous of a monopoly of dreams or of madness. These wild sovereigns bore upon their face the name of—"Edward the Seventh"—whoever he is, for there is no such king in English history. This money was contained in an ivory tube of Indian workmanship, lined with red velvet, which could scarcely have been a *purse*! But it looked greatly like a purse, and the coins seemed to be current coin in England at some time. But the whole find bewildered me. I am really afraid to speak about it.

I sought these pieces of money on a subsequent occasion when talking about their curiousness with friends. But I could then find nothing of the sort in the place where I thought I had deposited them. In short, my friends—as our friends generally do, supposing the worst always—averred that I had *fancied* these last particulars. And that in some state of tipsiness or sleep I had dreamed or invented. Which is false. I mention these circumstances only because it is dangerous to peep into carpet-bags. That which follows in the next pages I found;—the matter of the manuscript. It had no date, but it bore the mark, "London." I have suffered much in my suspicions about this mad manuscript; and now I disburthen myself. As "miching mallecho," doth it mean mischief? Perhaps the story of them and the forged sovereigns were stuffed into the bag together, and were the manufacture of some lying, adventuring author.





PROBABLY A DREAM—AS IT IS AN ANTICIPATED
MEMOIR ; IN TIME UNKNOWN.

THE following biography (written in the full sense of the truth of that which is asserted in relation to it) is intended as an exemplification of the blessing which we all possess in our daily fellowship. To few men in the hurry of ordinary life is it accorded to reflect upon the pleasure which lies before us in the voices that are to *people our day*. Little do we think of the delight of that dear human companionship, without which (though we so continually undervalue it and ignore it) life would be insupportable. We are too ready to accept the facts of our existence—as facts, and no more. We are disposed, almost through a certain prepossessed and insensate blindness, to take to our minds the conviction that we have—so to speak—*irrespectively of God*, a certain *right* in the natural facts of our condition here. We are apt to consider (in our absurd thoughtlessness) that the things belong to us, and are inalienable ; forgetting that all of *being*, as all that makes our state *its* state, is the gift of Heaven, and, *pro tanto*, is something for which we have to be *absolutely* thankful. That short step of advance which divides the pleasure of the sense of our life from the nameless opposite of life is so undeviatingly kept, that we never know, except from the sudden surprisal of its reverse, how huge is the mass of blessings by which we have been by Providence enriched. We refuse to acknowledge that we are not naturally engrafted in something comfortable. That it is only through *especial allowance* that we find our daily day to be the day which we expect. Could society, in all its countless

varieties of good to us, be placed side by side with the horrors of solitude, total, in this world; and if the transference could in one single step be made from the one into the other, how awed and hushed we should be in the conviction of the goodness of that Power, that divine fore-perception, which, before placing man in it, settled all the conditions, in the first place, through which he was really (in the world) to find himself! In our present non-natural (because so exceedingly artificial) state of society, we need a constant recall to nature. No disaster could be contemplated so thorough as the finding ourselves in the world alone. Therefore, from this picture, let us learn what vast and unsuspected good lies in “people.”

I fly from bills, dockets, and heaps of musty papers to thoughts of parlour curtains and a pair of venerable candlesticks—comfort all over—that stand on the side-board of my dining-room. Happy is the man who has a coat to his back, chairs, and sofas with soft cushions—aye, even a single chair that he can call *easy*—on which (or *in* which) to throw himself and seek relief from vexation and the hard stools of the world! Your arm-chair is really the harbour of refuge to you; which opens its protecting arms. There received, your strained and battered body can repose. Evening, and your four, five, or six o’clock relieves you from that daily “tempest-tossing” of trade; in which all your canvas will not sometimes suffice to carry you, like a ship, clear of the breakers. Generally speaking, no man makes a mistake as to his haven of rest—so far as his personal temporary comfort is concerned—when the door of his home closes behind him, with his foot on the rug in his hall or passage.

Much fatigued with business—for this month, June, proved very busy to me—I returned, late one evening, home. My own snug house forms an *oasis* in the desert of my every day’s occupation. Be it known to all the world that I am a bachelor. A single cup and saucer is placed upon my breakfast-table. One plate awaiteth me at the dinner-table. As yet I have not multiplied upon one. Though my prosperity might have tempted

to a more lavish domestic arithmetic. Serious thoughts have occasionally occupied me as to my taking a wife. I have thought of struggling forward amidst my chairs and tables for some object. But though yielding occasionally to the infirmities of nature, and amusing myself with an idea of promoting some other person's happiness than my own—selecting some woman, we will say, as the object of my love—I have yet not been tempted to take a wife. I have resisted marriage (as with strong expression I may imply) as the blandishment of Sathan, ever on the watch, with his baits, for the unwary. Especially unwary single men.

My friend Abraham Johnson has settled. A collar has been put round his neck. His free bachelor frill has been snipped by the scissors of Hymen. And he is thus compelled to take the rough with the smooth. He has settled down into a very patient and much-enduring, and, as he assures me, a very happy husband. His arguments against what he calls my "blindness"—my inattention to my own delight—would be irresistible did I not detect a certain fidget and over-anxiety as to my entering also into the married state. This I can scarcely avoid ascribing to his ever-worrying desire to see a fellow creature partaking the same secret decomposure as himself. We all love community in suffering. We are pleased that friends should have the same opportunities for exercising patience as ourselves. I may wrong Abraham Johnson. But if I do, he has himself (in his marriage) supplied me with the means. I cannot help it. I suspect.

"Now wealth—or even moderate means—is but cumbersome in some situations," my friend is wont to say. "I know no situation so unenviable," says he, "as that of the man who looks around him and sees accumulation of that which can purchase all the good things of this life—life and health of course excepted—while the sad and dispiriting certainty that there is no one in the world to enjoy it with him—no wife, no children (no dear wife, no dear children) to share the blessing, and from whom he can derive happiness by imparting it—presses with sick and dreary heaviness."

But I am straying from my story. Where can be the

benefit of moralising, when I am almost certain that I am the only person remaining of my whole unfortunate nation? "I am not mad, though this hair, which I do (not) tear, is mine." Why accumulate protests against matrimony, when (if I may believe evidence) Hamlet's denunciation as to what should befall in the world hath become true, and "there are no more marriages?" Why, when I can have no readers, should I write? It may be asked of me why, with my wonderful certainties, I should make a fool of myself by anyhow dipping in ink? Ah! if I have a reader, he shall learn a lesson from my story. A lesson indeed wonderful.

Why do I write? My answer is that I cannot help it. I try to disarm my recollections of their sting, in serving them up to notice. *I think in cipher.* I seek to make the misery to which my remembrance points, so familiar to my imagination that it may lose the horror of its newness. At the present all is new to me, and all is untold suffering.

Now for some particulars in my experience. Do not think me lost to reason.

Returning home from business late one evening in the Borough through which I passed—having had calls to make over the water—I bought of a Jew in the street from amidst heaped knickknacks and trumpery, an old Coin or Piece of Silver. I could hardly tell why I fancied it, except that—leaning over his stock at the curbstone (during which examination he talked incessantly)—I was seized with dizziness, which, however, was the reverse of disagreeable—nay, it had in it something like the exhilaration of champagne; or that effect that they relate of stimulating ether or chloroform. Any person passing along would perhaps have thought me mad, or very probably might have set me down as intoxicated; as with pale face, and evidently far gone in a droll deep sort of absurd reverie, I stood with fixed eyes gazing as into the very "heart of the matter" of this Coin—peering the closest into it.

I was veritably fixed and fascinated, staring as it were at nothing. But I was seeing strange things all the time in the "Coin"—like as I have heard of visions in

little pools of ink in the palm of the hand, or in glasses or crystals. And I was hearing an inexpressible sound as of sweet distant village-bells. Oh, so unimaginably beautiful!—swelling and sinking fairy-like as upon the wind and coming as from over solitary woody fields late in the warm light of some delicious summer's afternoon. Then there was a change in the tolling and the tingle, and there came in the words of a rhapsodist, "Sweet funeral bells from some incalculable distance, wailing over the dead that die before the dawn. Funeral bells from the desert seas—solemn knells—soft hollow knells."

I recovered, however, by a start, out of this dream—into which I was falling as into real magic—by a push from a rough coarse man who came forcing his way along. I heard his sudden "Geeho!" and the loud crack of the driver's whip at the same moment; and a cart passed. More to make my strange conduct somewhat intelligible than with any purpose otherwise, and to escape the confusion I felt at being thus ridiculously caught dreaming in the public street, I bought the Coin suddenly.

The strange results which followed I can only ascribe to unaccountable magnetic effects—(which let philosophers explain)—of the Coin on my mind even after I had happily got free of it; which I soon did.

But the reader knows nothing of my personality as yet, and I must enlighten him; if the Coin has not made me stupid.

My name is Reginald Scatterworth, and I am of a good, but decayed family. One of my ancestors was in the army, and did good service to his country during a somewhat prolonged stay in the West Indies. But he made no money. We have also been distinguished in the humbler paths of art. An unfortunate progenitor, whom I will not otherwise mention than as falling into loose courses at the theatres, was an artist of some repute; and he is now called a celebrated painter of portraits—perhaps because he is dead and gone.

"This is impossible," said I (Engel De Lara), as I encountered this passage. "This refers to things best known to me as now—as *contemporaneous*—to people

actually that I know at the present. Or there is some strange, altogether unprecedented, ridiculous coincidence of names and people. I have heard of such things. But I have treated them as foolish. It sets my head in a whirl to understand it. 'Scatterworth'—'artist'—'prolonged stay in the West Indies!' Surely I know something about this. Perhaps it is some nonsense of Scatterworth's own—some folly indeed." I read on, and now with interest.

It was on the 23rd day of June, 1887, that I bought this Old Coin. Late in the evening I returned home. I flung myself on the sofa, exceedingly fatigued, and rang for my dinner. Up came my housekeeper with the now chill and smokeless repast—the original intention with regard to which was that it should be hot—spoiled and parboiled by keeping over some four hours. I was so sleepy that the fact of her entrance conveyed no more definite impression to me than that the door opened, and that somebody came in. It required several hearty shakes—which at another time I should have thought intolerable and resented angrily, but which seemed then quite natural—to make me open my eyes and be sensible that the dinner awaited. I rose, and as my sensations seemed to—

[I (Engel de Lara) laid down the manuscript at this point, and saw clearly that the whole, and the rest of the contents of the carpet-bag, were all masquerading nonsense. The wild, impossible narrative had evidently been written by Scatterworth for a temporary purpose of raising money; and he had used the real incidents of his obtaining of the Old Coin as the keynote (as it were), and as a suggestion of a tale. At which he had tried his hand, as a means added to his profession of painter, to get a livelihood. Where he now was, I could not tell.]

I resumed. I literally, through excess of sleepiness, *staggered* to the table. But it was long (owing to my sleepy state), before I could find an appetite. At length I shook off a little of the stupor which oppressed, and I began to address myself to that which was placed for me. About an hour and a half elapsed before I had finished; for I ate with laziness, and I

even, every now and then, took a five minutes' council whether I would again, as the Nurse says of Paris in relation to Juliet, "lay knife aboard." Though the operation had for end nothing less than gratification of my defrauded indispensable appetite, yet could I scarcely advance. At last, however, I finished; sent all away; saw tumbler and rum placed upon the table without motion of mine towards it. And then I moved myself to the fire; for the evening was not warm. Here slippers so comfortable that the Grand Turk might have sought his softest ottoman whereon appropriately to bestow them, dressing-gown so multiplying and so lined that you might have searched for an old gentleman in it some time before you had felt his face, and an easy chair so beyond all measure easy that a life-long sitter on thorns, might (in it) have found not only relief, but compensation; here at the fireside these snug bachelor-comforts were. I was in bliss. I felt no longer as the condemned soul—a moral Ixion making ceaseless wheel upon the spikes of his daily life. My very pains assisted with my sense of comfort. I would not have been extricated from those billowy depths for the world. My drowsy state was Elysium. I beheld all the hard work, and all vexations, from a safe castle far off, as it were. I was secure. Nobody could trouble me any more; for this night at least. I looked out upon the world—as a happy Robinson Crusoe or Alexander Selkirk—from a blessed "Island" of the most enjoyable stuffing and crimson cloth. A hundred *heuris* propped my declining arms. I felt as if the screws were taken out of my wrists, and that my hands were sustained by a fairy court whose touch was eider-down. I had a whole cloud for the back of my head; and the penalties of two rebellious Peris, with cheeks as pink and soft as peach-bloom, were nothing less than to fester my two feet in their bosom.

A grateful glow—just the smoothest and the serenest warmth diffused from the fire. The day itself had been fine and warm, and the fire dispelled the last lingering touch of rawness in even the least penetrable corner. All was a very "Naples" of atmospherical, if of no

other contentment—a very Tempe for the toilworn; in which my magnificent garden of worsted flowers on the hearthrug diffused a more odorous breath—shone with greater smoothness and more sedatively-toned radiance than the hollyhocks of even the fabulously perfect vale of delight—whether of carpets or of Canary Islands.

O softest carpet on which no foot dare sound! O winking mahogany which art as a very mirror to this noble flame—this flame of true glowing seaborne coal! O silence—if I may *call* upon silence—in the street! Dost thou not lull me into the gratulate obliviousness of Lethe?—the “wharf” of which referred to I as a City man and a sort of coal-merchant ought certainly to understand; but I do not. Are not all the pricks of the arrows of my counting-house vexations extracted now like most titillating thistle-top out of my luxurious pillow-like body in this securest and sunniest of havens?

I had a book. I had an angel that was bidden to pour into my mind its philosophy. I had a heavenly Presence who was all alight (as it were) with magic flame. And who, through the mists of my state of drowse, shone with an intense *nimbus*; and in an encircling atmosphere of joy that seemed to await me just beyond, and just outside of that ring of semi-somnolence in which I lay.

I took no heed of time. Clocks were not for me. Wheel-like registers, and dial-points, were for slaves. I was as a free man whose liberty filled and penetrated the whole world. I had the whole sun to myself. Two or ten—night or day—were alike indifferent to me. But in sober verity, and in plain English, it was in the manner following that I passed an hour or two. First perhaps a selfish revery was mine; in which, truly, I played unimaginable pranks; the most innocent of which, doubtless, if through any magic means he could have become aware of it, would have startled the Policeman (whom I heard with his *tramp, tramp*) into sudden knocking. But there was silence. And Policeman B 15 went on his way (like policemen sometimes) quite unsuspecting of what tricks are going on under his nose.

Then awaking to a sense of the good things (happy

pauper upon the plenteous "out-of-door" relief of Nature), that were no farther off than within the reach of my hand, I drew the case-bottle of rum towards me. I described sundry circles on the table without looking that way, until I found the lemon; and shaking the smoking water with no very steady hand I mixed as exciting a tumbler as the comfortable absurdity of my ideas at that time about everything and my disdain about everybody admitted. A pause to let the tumbler cool, and a stir of the fire and a piling-up of the coals—for there had been several heavy showers, and the night was damp outside and cold—a sip or two of my rum-and-water with the full smart in my lips of the lemon, and intervals of thinking; then a certain nodding that betokened "Bedfordshire;" and a sudden waking and arrest of myself on the edge of the precipice made by my chair, and a certain startled, yet seated, pugilistic encounter, in my dream, with Nobody and his Nobodies—these were in my experience. But at last a sort of dogged, self-assured, thickheaded touch of waking sense set in. And I felt that these symptoms were not to be propitiated by aught short of bolster and pillow. Bed, unmistakable bed, was what it all meant.

At ten o'clock (or a "little" after) I swept up my hearth, which I always do before going to bed, being a neat and tidy man, and an altogether irreproachable housekeeper and bachelor. I clapped my book under my arm. It was a "mad book," by the way, which had in it a Story of Magic, capitally told, as all such stories should be. I rang for my chamber-candlestick; left on her appearance authority for the fastening-up of the house for the first time for I cannot tell how long to my trusty Betty; then I deliberately and full of thought about all sorts of things—

"Bedward plodded my weary way,"

leaving the house finally to darkness and my housekeeper:—who was to see the end of the "world."

I had had several fits of terrible headache this night, an ailment to which I am not subject. I was puzzled. I felt uneasy about this Piece of Silver which had come

so strangely into my hands. And repeatedly (but without any object in doing so, and only because I could not help it) I went to look at my prize as it lay—slyly



This is the picture of the famous crystal globe (or glass), through which (having made it my own), I indeed saw very strange things. It was an item of a magician's private furniture.

by itself I could have sworn—in the drawer to which I had unconcernedly at first committed it. Once I actually came down from the top of the house with a motive

which any unprepossessed and common-sense person would have declared mad. It was to assure myself that the "Thing" was still there; just as if it should have wings wherewith to fly away. Anxiety beset me as to the fact whether it *was* there when I got again into bed; though I seemed heartily to wish that I had never seen it. I began to associate some devil with the marks and the figures upon this Coin—a Real Devil.

Now the possession of this Silver Piece put me in such a nervous state that, naturally a man of rapid motives and movements, I ran to the drawer and seized it with the same fear with which I would have snatched a snake. I shuddered all over while I held the thing at arm's length between finger and thumb to look at it. I opened the window wide, and I flung it forth with a violence—nay, with a horror—which caused the Coin actually to spin seemingly spitefully into a trail of light. As it flew it meandered. Was it fancy or was there really a *flash* upwards into the sky, like the yellow flicker of a candle, as it alighted again with its CURSE upon the earth?

I was now wide-awake enough. This (all) sounds strange, but it is true. I burst into a passion of tears—childish and foolish as this may be. I ran to my arm-chair, I knelt down at it and I prayed God fervently. I besought that the mischief I dreaded from this—which I now construed as a messenger of evil—might fall (lightly as it should please the Disposer of all events) upon my heedless head. That its malice might be limited to the mere *fancy*. That the terror I expected might be unreal, and only of the imagination. That no severer hold should be taken of me than the temporary affliction of the wandering mind. And my prayer was granted. As the reader will find in my subsequent history. Blessed be the heavenly care over me by night as by day! Thank all the Good Things for it, I escaped.

And that which was the result of all this proved astonishing, and beyond expression dreadful, as the reader will find who pursues me in my farther narrative. This I should advise him to do for his own sake, if he seek instruction, or is nervous. Events soon happened of the most tremendous national threatening in my

house. I am aware that I write very strangely, but I cannot altogether persuade myself that I move in a thorough day-dream. It is true that occasionally (to alleviate very violent neuralgic pains), I avail of a most extraordinary *Chinese drug*, which I never found a European medical man to be acquainted with; and which was presented to me in very small, cautious quantity by a friend, a merchant who was conversant with the peculiar *pharmacopœia* of the Land of Flowers; and who himself made use of this drug to raise pleasurable reveries, he said, of the nature of which he would never apprise me.



No. 1.



No. 2.

No. 1—No. 2.—Engravings upon a miniature metal-chest in which I kept my “most extraordinary Chinese drug—unknown to European medical men.”

With myself, however, the strange stories which I *lived* through when at a chance time under this influence, were anything but pleasant. As the reader who peruses my confessions much farther will soon perceive. Mine is a very strange history of self; and—read aright—a very sensational one, to use the hackneyed phrase of the time. For as the reader finds stated in the outset, this is a wild story in the German manner; which is the best romantic manner.



NIGHTMARE. TIME:—UNKNOWN.

I SAID I went to bed. A new scene opened. I slept like a top. I started suddenly up; surprised to see the sunshine look so glaring and *noonlike*. A feeling of dreadful dismay and vexation effectually cleared off all latent drowsiness. What a time I must have been sleeping, to be sure! I looked at my watch. The hand pointed to half-past ten. I could hardly believe it. Twelve mortal hours had I been sleeping. At a stretch (or step) I had overpassed a day. I had lost it more thoroughly than Titus. No dreams had there been, varying my sleep—nothing that I could remember—no thought—nought. There was a perfect blank—a void with no bridge across it. The reader has probably, at some time or other, started thus up; I arose alarmed at being so suddenly found befooled.

I had never had such a sleep in my life. I was as much frightened at it, as I was displeased and discomforted at the lateness; because *it was the middle of the day*.

That traitorous Betty! To leave me thus lying in absurd fashion, with the wide-awake tramping all about the house. Why had I not been called? It was of the utmost importance to me that I should be early in business every day. It was my strictest order that seven a.m. (both summer and winter) should never be let slip without the uncremonious *rat-tat!*—nay, the *thump, thump!* at my door; and the accompanying intimation:—“It’s seven o’clock, sir, and your water’s ready.” This (every morning that I open my bedroom door and take it in) is always hot—smoking and

steaming, meaning alertness and industry. It is only on Sunday that I allow myself licence, and hear the church bells toll in bed; hugging myself in my *sanctum* of the bedclothes, warm.

I jumped out of bed. I began to dress myself in fury; in desperation; veritably like one caught at it. What would I not have given to put back all the clocks? And how glad I should have been to be able to manage so as to deceive all London about those two lost hours, in regard to which hours all the racing now in the world could not overtake! My hurry was headlong. It was as if I was a fellow-gardener, and that Time had run away with my scythe for his own. Feeling all over a tingle of excitement, I fumbled and fidgeted with my buttons, making sad havoc in the orderliness of my dressing, and dropping and recovering one item of dress after another. I shook my head in rage; and I predetermined to have a tremendous scold at my housekeeper the moment I had enough on decently to do it. What satisfaction there is in these fierce resolves! A man almost forgives him whom he has challenged and proposes to exterminate, even while in his mind he is shooting him through. I positively felt all the less in a rage with this housekeeper—this woman who had betrayed me—because I was—to put it rather strongly—going to give her the most extraordinary blow-up. This complacency was like oil thrown upon fire, that cools while it heightens the flame.

Dear me, all fate conspires against me to day! Half-past ten; nay, as I live, there goes a quarter to eleven! Why have the clocks taken it into their contradictory brass heads to be so very regular to-day—so overwhelmingly precipitant in their jumble of chimes? My office of course has all its doors and windows as wide open as dragon's eyes. The Strand is in its bustle. Doubtless the whole of Somerset House—where for my own or my father's or for somebody's misfortune I am an official, a clerk, I suppose—on the look-out to detect me. Even the porter will eye me with displeased pity though with no words as he sees me slink in—with a false braving of it—past those well-known doors. Smiles

and smirks on the faces of escaped decently early men, and that Jones at his intolerable irony again! Oh, it is unbearable! The ante-room of my office perhaps filled by people waiting (now) who shall quell me by-and-by with their ironical respect, and shine me down with their so very keen disappointed eyes, reminding me of "half the day gone." Oh that I could get in at the window!—for I have, you know, a private room—and be found there in my office, without running the gauntlet of porters and common clerks. Oh that I could be able to say—and to attest with triumph that I had been *within* all the time that those fellows had been wondering as to what had become of me, venturing their offensive jokes! Curse the soap! It never slipped so out of my hand as this dreadful morning. Oh I must run away to Primrose Hill.

I thought of little but hurry and anger, as, all in a tremble with annoyance and vexation, I descended the stairs. All was silent in the hall, and all was still seemingly in the kitchen as I leant on the banisters to listen. So I stepped into the drawing-room and pulled the bell, determined to open my fire the moment the enemy should "heave within range." Betty, however, did not think proper to come up:—she was probably conscience-struck, and consequently cautious. There is an instinct sometimes in these predetermined scoldings. Even dogs and cats will gather beforehand the domestic tempest that awaits them. But *n'importe!* I pulled a second time at the bell, and had no better luck. "She must have fallen asleep," said I. "But it was not ill of her to do her work first. The fire is lighted, although it looks as if it had all gone black for want of poking. The apartment is put in order, and the breakfast things are upon the table. However, I must have hot water, and that with the quickness of lightning. And with that hot water shall come that treacherous woman's scolding."

After a few more ineffectual rings I walked downstairs into the kitchen, but I found it vacant. Where could she be? Where can my servant have hidden herself? What on earth can possess her? Her bed-

room door was open, for she slept downstairs. I looked in at first cautiously, and then more boldly ; but nobody was there. I reascended the stairs much more hurriedly now. I felt a vague feeling of alarm. In the words of Robinson Crusoe, "it was all one." She was neither in the parlour nor in the drawing-rooms—in short, she was in no part of the house. Quite amazed and with a very anxious, perplexed brow I walked to the drawing-room window. The odd—the utter silence of the street (populous and noisy enough all day yesterday) for the first time struck me. Not a person was in sight ; though the shutters of the houses opposite were open, and all looked as it usually did in the street. Not a soul could I see either up or down on the pavement. Not a wheel could I hear. But the street in which I lived was a quiet dull one, as it is called, though a good many pedestrians were accustomed in the course of the day to come along it. I did not so much wonder at the silence, from my knowledge of the sort of solitary street in which I lived. And I may as well explain to the reader that my street was the old one called Queen Anne Street, in the parish of St. Marylebone ; and that the house I lived in, as well as the adjoining house, were erected in the room of a large one, the lease of which expired in the year 1869, and which, being very old, was pulled down, and the present couple of smaller though more convenient houses built in its room.

With a strange, wondering, disagreeable feeling possessing me I seized my hat ; I opened the street door ; and I sallied into the street. At the first turning I paused and looked up and down the street which crossed mine ; and which led at no great distance into Cavendish Square. I stared. Well I might indeed stare and stare again. Not a soul was to be seen. Not a carriage was to be caught a glimpse of. I hurried along, I crossed Cavendish Square ; glancing up at the statue of Lord George Bentinck at the southern side, and noticing the new "Metropolitan Athenæum" raised on the site formerly occupied by the old pulled-down mansion of the Duke of Portland. I turned down Princes Street, ran across Oxford Street, and arrived at the top of that

usually everyday crowded and brilliant thoroughfare, through which such a living affluence passes (particularly of respectable people, which was a comfort to think of, even at such a dreadful moment). By this the reader will gather that I mean Regent Street. It was here all the same. *Not a soul, however distant, was to be seen. Not a wheel broke upon the astounded ear.* All was deathlike silence. It was as the silence of the "country" rather, for two crows (and then one) came winging blackly high above me, and the last gave a fearful *ca-aw* as he looked down into the empty—the utterly deserted streets. Was not this indeed mad? Was not this astonishing?

I was perfectly bewildered. Words cannot express my stupor. I stood petrified—doubting almost if I lived, and very much inclined to insist that I was in some tremendous dream. Let the reader just reflect upon my situation. I was alone, one solitary individual in the very midst of London, in one of its (with people) most thickly filled streets, standing in the junction point of four ways and alternately looking down each street vainly expecting to see some person, or some symptom of the inhabitants. I was standing truly in the City of the Dead. Let the reader with his knowledge of what London is; with his recollection every day; with his picture of crowded streets, the bustling throng, the rattle and rumble of wheels heavy and light, the chaos of carriages, the innumerable people, the never-ceasing activity, the immense stir and agitation, the variety of objects and employments, the clatter of conflicting business, the pursuits, the vast and apparently more than mortal roar of this overgrown metropolis, London, fancy himself standing like me alone—
• ALONE in its deserted streets.

I was the only survivor of general destruction. I was the last man in that so late populous world. I was the only human witness surviving amidst the dwellings of thousands and scores of doubling and tripling thousands, the sole wretch surviving from an universal human disappearance. And then the houses were so large, so proud, so towering—drawing sullenly away till

lost in the dimness of perspective presenting never-ending streets. The pavement did now only echo back my single solitary tread. The roads, the endless double chains of lamps, the wilderness of streets were round me. And I was unconnected—cut off from my kind—with nothing but my single voice in this whole gigantic and awful solitude. A voice how soon lost amidst this myriad of buildings that closed me so in, in their still and tomb-like recesses. A voice how feebly returned, sounded mine, when ventured on the chill architectural surface which rose up sadly and supernaturally before me, *now actually dreadful. All London was mine.* I was the possessor of countless wealth—of piles of rich things that would baffle the utmost resource of arithmetic to compute. I could enter every shop and ransack its stores without voice to deter or molestation. For years I could employ myself in examining each house and going from one to another, from street to street, from one quarter of the town to another quarter of the town, till maddened by my unearthly solitude—my more than mortal isolation—I seized a torch, sought one of the numberless repositories of combustibles that were to be found in the business parts, and firing it, put an end to the horrors that silently were around by burning this one mighty late world of humanity, witnessing alone the conflagration of the modern Babylon, and perishing in the flames of my *whole city* for an impossible mausoleum.

Oh what a sight, I thought, would such be! What should be my sensation in witnessing (without a soul to share it) so splendid, yet so awful a final scene! What companion should I have, but that very superhuman element FIRE, which I could call into existence with my own hand, and which (mastering its producer at the moment of its so fearful excitement) should soar above my reach and destroy in exalting its own too fiery flags, the power that throned it? Fire would laugh to scorn the so thoroughly insignificant means whereby it was produced. It would trample upon that small intelligence that with rash and scarcely adequate means had unbound it—sleeping—had cast loose as shattered locks

of chains the spells that held it, bursting as into the fury of the ungoverned hell. Conflagration methought—the red destroyer dilating in a redder hell—shall rush amidst the mazes of this impious, because too godless London. In dethroning pride, luxury, and vice, and in casting those mildew-growths upon the prostituted structures of a debased and betrayed civilisation into the sparkling smoke of this one wide metropolitan sacrifice, I should raise methought—Phœnix-like—in the room of the monstrous capital the eternal image alone of the Infinite. Perhaps the eternal and the ultimate Fire dreamt of by the old Chaldæans and Magi. Perhaps the undisturbed and immaterial Rêst longed-for in the metaphysic reveries of the Buddhist—restoring the desert to the contemplator.

Fire—fire alone—I thought must purge this sinful city. Burning, as a personality, with the grasped flashes of shots—Jupiter-like—in its tremblingly-eager hand shall start in triumph over *me* its producer, and ride upon the wings of the wind through the flame-undulating streets. The armies of the red element shall throng hither from the uttermost parts of the earth. There shall be the old battle-stir in the depths of Etna. Thunders shall beat again as to arms. The forces of the icy Hecla, the legioned garrisons of the fiery citadels, mountains dispersed as towers of watch and as the altars of the old faith over the ridgy surface of the glowing earth, shall rouse. The ramparted mountains, piled of their volcanic shelves and with their sulphurous battlements and lancet-lights—these mountains which show, in days and nights of elemental battle, their lamps and signals; and which hang their pendant flames curving as banners and tongues of fire lapping over their serrated crown; those which pour their Vulcanian lava-rivers—plough-like—into troughs and giant furrows that fence impassably the mighty crater as with fortified ditch and cannoned mound: these shall tell of that call to war. What matter whether I myself fall as the first shipwrecked sailor into this sea of flame! Earth shall spout through all her fountains and the world's second Deluge—

from within—shall now be fire. The monster-chimneys of the globe shall tinge their smokes bloodred. Altars shall the great hills become with their mighty spires of flame shooting heavenward in worship to the Genius of Conflagration.

The reader will see how dreadful and irrational my thoughts had become. Fire I thought must be the escape. The city could not stand. I should go mad before I neared its outskirts. Its churchyard-silence seemed already to overpower me. I must destroy it. Fire and myself must be its double-kings, and we must only yield our throne together!

Had there been but one human being left to share the solitude with me, methinks I could have borne the horror. How did I know? There might be yet another solitary being like myself at some extremity of the metropolis who was making the same lamentation as I was—who was mourning his desolate condition as I; wandering the empty streets alone perhaps at a long distance like myself and yearning for the possibility of a human voice. This thought operated like magic. It allayed that dreadful sensation in my brain in a moment, and I gradually became more quiet in mind and composed in that fearful fever—that fire of the blood which alternately made me feel hot and cold.

Some time elapsed. I gasped less convulsively. My pulses began to cease the fearful continuity of their beat. I walked down Regent Street, I rounded the Quadrant, I passed along the lower part of Regent Street and I found myself in Waterloo Place. Here where Waterloo Place widens towards the flight of steps, the Shakspeare Column,* the Club Houses and

* This column was, I believe, twenty years ago called by another name, and was dedicated to, and surmounted by, a statue of Frederic Duke of York, brother of that George the Fourth who built a Chinese temple in the neighbourhood of Virginia Water, near Windsor, for a fishing-house; and who, though at one time very popular with the English nation as the "first gentleman in Europe," (a character for which they have always a superstitious reverence), cost the people money. He was ridiculed by one Thackway or Thackeray in a production called the "Georgian Era" or the "Four Georges;" Thackeray was a comic writer whose name appears between 1851 and 1861.

the Park did I check my too hasty steps, ending by sitting down on the pavement and wringing my hands. Still—still the same. Silence—unbroken silence. A desert of buildings contained me. A solitude more profound than that of the vastest waste, that whose uncounted extent of miles of parching sand reduces the figures of the solitary travellers to the insignificance of the very grains that are unperceivable in a foot square of the universal desert—that sky-like blank around them. I could not induce myself to enter any of the houses, though all were open. Shops—doors of large buildings stared me in the face in every direction and smiled me almost into frenzy. Everything looked natural; and yet how everything looked unnatural. I hurried on through the graves of universal mortality seemingly in the town.

And how could I account for all this? There was the terrible certainty, however, that nobody was in London besides myself. Whither had the inhabitants fled? Had they sunk into the earth? Had they been wholly swept away by some effect invisible and inscrutable? And all in one night. London was itself when I went to bed, last night, and what is it now? I seek sleep with the world around, and wake into a new one—the world's solitary tenant. I looked up at the sky as if seeking for answer there. A strange sort of light was in the sky, but there was no portent. I asked myself whether I was awake—*living*? By what strange and awful means had the people thus imperceptibly passed away—passed away like a thought never to be recalled; faded like the "baseless fabric" of vision, leaving not a trace behind? This suspense—this weight of hopeless wonder—was torturing. I could but ask the question, Where have the people fled? Whither have they gone? Ah where indeed? And echo could only answer me in my own words—Where? Ah where indeed? Where have all the people gone?

I passed down Pall Mall, and entered Trafalgar Square. How different was it from yesterday! Where was the crowd pressing through the doors of the Museum of the late extinguished Turkish Empire, once

called a National Gallery? Here were all inanimate objects unconscious and unchanged as before; the naval monument of Nelson, with the Corinthian column and the statue, the balustrades across that which might have been made a noble area, the three shops for printing by electricity, the equestrian statue of King Charles, the British and Hungarian Combined Clubs (once Northumberland House), Trafalgar Square itself now noiseless and deserted as the valley of the fearful Upas. All mocked me with its voiceless sameness. The sun was high and hot, the sky intensely blue, and the burning sunshine was streaming down and gilding the monuments of the departed, "whitened sepulchres" as were the houses; still, steady, and untenanted.

I reached the Strand. The new rows of shops and houses on the south side of the thoroughfare looked just as usual. A labyrinth of empty streets extended round me. The stillness of a great graveyard brooded over the roofs, the spires, the colossal magnificence of silenced London. Surely this was a dream.

The upper end of the Strand and the Triumphal Arch or Propylon, dedicated to the achievements of the great General Tomlinson—erected in the place of the old and dingy Temple Bar—now rose upon the sight. I increased my pace. Fleet Street, Ludgate Hill, St. Paul's Churchyard, Cheapside, the Poultry, Lombard Street, Fenchurch Street, Thames Street, were successively passed through. And I walked along the Custom House Terrace, with its dolphins and rows of double geraniums, and reaching the stairs I began to think of the desolation I had witnessed in my long walk. Shops, warehouses, manufactories, public buildings, private houses, streets, lanes, courts and alleys had *shocked* me with their more than unpopulated stillness. I was half-stupefied, and gazed vacantly upon the broad and silvery surface of the quiet Thames, as it rippled gently up to my feet—the tide was setting mildly:—and it seemed to proclaim that it was the only thing gifted with motion within the monster circle of (almost itself) our *kingdom* of a metropolis.

I leaped into a wherry and seized the oars, anxious

to drift down the glittering river towards the country and be destroyed; and so escape the horrors that possessed the City of the Dead. Here was fresh food for wonder. The tiers of shipping rose grandly before me, frowning like giants on the silent water, and they seemed to taunt me with my utter helplessness and insignificance. A forest of masts grew thicker round me, and I floated buried in its recesses. *I grew now frightened at the things around me.* The mighty vessels with their lofty sides—black as the passage-boats of the dusky Styx—the nets of labyrinthine cordage, the sea of ships' tracery, the squared yards, the fluttering streamers—the tiers of colliers, steamers, and coasters stretching out before me, all perspective lost by distance and by the turns of the river—the river-craft of all descriptions, the unwieldy steam-ships with their dumpy funnels, their black hulls, and their red paddles—these objects of life and use ten thousand times more horrid in their present motionless abandonment and lumbering uselessness than if all was in flame before me. This, with the wide, silent Petra on the shores, the spectral metropolis on each side, with its hundred tapering church spires, its sublimely-domed cathedral, its towered abbey, the mass of Gothic buildings forming the new Palace of Parliament with the gigantic Victoria Tower, the ocean of wavy roofs (smokeless now, alas!), the splendid bridges, the embankments or boulevards, the magnificent public buildings—all these in the view, rose up majestic around, and seemed each in its varying individuality to be about completing the work by driving me to the same extinction which had so momentarily swallowed up all the living population that had made London—London.

I looked up to the blue sky over me. There all was still. There all was calm and beautiful. The sun was in fervid grandeur above. The snow-heaped clouds sailed slow through the lovely blue. Glorious was all. There was sun on all imaginable objects. Summer was hot on the pavements; bright in the streets. Dazzling hot sun flashed on the river—made spars and cordage live. Light shone on the most distant objects—made

that which was farthest seem unnaturally near. The glories of the sky (clouds and all) were reflected on the glassy blue bosom of the shining river. A deliciously-soft south-western wind blew in my face, and as it swept gently over its surface caused the river to tremble. All was peace and beauty—peace that was maddening in its intensity—beauty that was terrible because it was so “all alone” with its beauty.

I could bear no more. All that I had gone through since the morning seemed to rush upon me at once; to now overpower. All familiar objects were around me—the ancient Tower, the Monument, London Bridge, the Southwark Iron Bridge seen through the arches of London Bridge in noble perspective, St. Saviour’s Church—every well-known building in succession—and yet how strange, how changed, how startling! I dropped the oars and clasped my hands over my face. The fall of the oars in the water, silent as all was, seemed to my preternatural attention to be the *only noise in London*. Oh what joy it would have been to have heard at ever so great a distance the voice of some person shouting as in answer to me! Excited by this idea I started up and called aloud with my whole strength. I listened in an agony for an answer. But all was silent. My shout echoed on the banks and expired—after doubling and multiplying as echoes will—amongst the buildings which crowded the river-edge and amidst the vessels congregated at its multitudinous wharves. This disappointment completed my overthrow and ended my endurance. I pressed my hands over my eyes, and in a fit of frenzy—as if in search of a human face—I threw myself into the river. Down I fell headforemost. The waters bubbled and rolled and closed over my head. I felt myself strangling in the water—bursting for breath. My senses were sinking. I was going fast into oblivion. My last sensation was that of the tide splashing against something that felt like my legs for a log; but which was now my whole body.

Just as I had closed my eyes for the last time and had composed myself as if willingly to *cease*, I heard a

voice as if rolling over the surface of the waves absurdly above me. New life rushed into me at the sound. I grew back into a "round thing" again. I listened in intensity. The cry was repeated. Again it smote my ear. "I am saved, I am saved," thought I at last! Then I caught the words—"It's nine o'clock, sir, and the water's got stone cold!" I struggled hard as with the muffle of a blanket which I was tossing over me (for that is the only word for the numb sensation which I had at the ends of my fingers). And in which muddle of a blanket I seemed eternally baffled at finding any opening at which to get my face out. I rolled about uselessly for some time and must have rolled the blanket round and round. I bumped up against something that came floating up as if for the very purpose, the shock of the grasp of which brought me suddenly as on my back to myself.

All at once, and in an unaccountable manner—with a pain that shot straightly and suddenest right through my length—I AWOKE! I stared. I rubbed my eyes. There was no river. There were no dreadful churches. There were no ghastly ships. The day was suddenly all taken up as if by magic. There was no sun (at least not *that* sun) flaming in the sky. If there were two suns I had now at all events got the real one. Who that has waked out of an unpleasant dream but has not felt that joy? There was again a voice, but it was now the voice of "my own world." The door was knocked at obstreperously and I soon found how all was. I had been dreaming. The truth was that a more than usually foolish, though a very distinct dream had swathed itself mischievously round my *caput* much like a Turk's turban. But I felt boisterously happy. Delight of delights! Glory of glories! I had a whole sackful of joy (more than gold) poured-out upon me. *There were people in London besides myself.* London had all come back again. I had to begin again like a child all my pleasures in it. I was as a child again in my anticipations of it. As my first felicitation on a return into the world of human faces, on recognising her voice, "accoutred as I was"—

that is, not accoutred at all—I flung wide the door of my bedroom and rushed out and hugged my housekeeper. Do not laugh.

No person can appreciate my feelings or enter into my happiness who has not (like me) realised the horrors of London without people and you the only witness of it. We have so much of the commodity about us that we never embrace our fellow men as we ought; never reflect how much delight we have to draw upon (as on a bank) in the sight of our fellow creatures. Truly to adequately impress ourselves with the blessings of society we ought only just to go into solitary confinement for a week. I warrant we should come out ready enough to throw ourselves into the arms of the first human creature—be he Sweep or Secretary of State—that we should encounter. My dream had done me good; for all that day I felt that I could stop and shake hands with everybody that I met in the streets. I dissent altogether from Byron's assertion that "in solitude we are least alone." I think, on the contrary, we are very much alone. My now unalterable opinion is that retirement—though in a Camden Town omnibus where you are the last passenger—is not by any means so delightful as those foolish poets would induce us to think. It is only those who are safest in the desire, that wish everybody removed out of the world and themselves thus abandoned to the felicity of their own thoughts. They know that there is no chance of their being taken at their word—their being left to the vacancy—nay, to the insupportable pain of their own exclusive self. Though at one time—like other simpletons—recusant to the justice of it, I now above all things see the wisdom of Alexander Selkirk's apostrophe to society, when he says—

"Oh! solitude where are the charms
That sages have seen in thy face?"

And in the most thorough conviction of the truth of the conclusion at which he arrives, remembering my own tortures during a nightmare sort of exploration of an abandoned London (even of an empty house in which

to reign sole monarch, much less of a whole city); I would with Selkirk exclaim—

“Better dwell in the midst of alarms”

—aye, alarms of tax-gatherers and of duns with double knocks—

“Than reign in such horrible place.”

The love of solitude is a mere sentiment. Depend upon it that solitude is only good when you have the assurance that you have society to betake yourself to whenever you should feel the inclination.

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When I had arrived at the close of this unaccountable manuscript, my sensations were of very mixed character. Who the author of it could be I could not at all imagine. Scatterworth I doubted. Unless it owed its origin to the mysterious individual whom I had encountered in the Theatre, and when on my way to the Railway.

I could not but suspect that it was written with design; and I seemed to refuse to believe but that the dates and the individualities were pretended, and that the whole production was a contemporaneously written romance, post-dated on purpose for absurd effect. I attributed the whole elaborate, circumstantial story to a scheme on the part of somebody, simply to astonish and bewilder.

But the connection of the narrative with the coin, its mention of my friend Scatterworth, the similarity of the strange incidents to some in regard of the Silver Piece to which I had myself been witness, puzzled me. All that extravagant part relating to a future deserted London (made past in the story), was of course a dream. But then I had to account for real things, too! The carpet-bag, so like my own, was a real carpet-bag. And granting that the story was merely fanciful, and written for the purpose of either imposing upon, or amusing people, how was I to explain the gold coins of so unusual a mintage; how was I to explain the inscription upon them and the ivory-tube which—to me

at least—looked like an outlandish purse, of some impossible period; even for London with “King Edward the Seventh;” who we hope may be long—very long—delayed; on account of that good Queen and matchless woman—his Mother.

But difficult as all these absolutely real facts were to account for, I, of course—as a person of common-sense, living in the ordinary world—found it easy to believe in anything rather than in the possibility of magic. That is, real magic in this world about me. And with this declaration, as far as I am personally concerned, I quit the subject gladly.

Let the dream (or the fiction) go for what it is worth. For mine is professedly a wild story, constructed in the German manner, which is wild enough as all knowledge of it allows; yet that wildness is perfectly consistent with wisdom, and with excellent instruction too, besides the amusement which we derive from it, and the fine, elevating pictures for the imagination; which is our human noblest gift—the only faculty raising man from earth to Heaven.

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We are thickening ourselves in our mechanic dreams too much. We are posing ourselves with systems. We are living the heart out of us. We are making very clockwork of the grand intensities of nature. We are fencing ourselves in formalisms, and translating the life-long charities into pounds and pence. Even our very fine cases (our bodies), are growing vastly too fine, vastly too wonderful and too elaborately made for us. Why not be of rough material and of mere painted bulk—as it were, of glue and boards—instead of making up of (red) blood and of (white) flesh? Why, when we are so laboriously casting ourselves as into ingots for the devil’s golden Hades, should we make all this hypocritical fuss about purity, and concerning moral improvement? Surely we should rather become stumps, blocks—turn into dead hard wood, or shapes as mean and unhandsome as Lapland idols—when all our fine sympathies are being civilised or whitewashed out of us, and when our very affections are strangled (Oh! think

us not coarse because we feel so strongly about these sins, our dear, misguided reader), like misbegotten children. Children of no "parish," since they belong not to a money-parish. Owning no love, since they cannot claim affinity with the "love" of banknotes.

We have forgotten the inside of the cup in the bur-
nishing of the exterior. Nor do our triumphs in the
commoner delicacies go great lengths. We can make
an anchor, but we cannot "cook a dinner." We can
spin yards of calico, almost, as it were, at a flash of
our steam-engines, but we can scarcely make a bow.
The banks groan with our gold; and yet we have not
the art, profitably (that is, towards our soul's health),
to make or spend a shilling. Our heads are growing
into gold, almost, while our hearts are fast becoming but
as the merest blown paper-bag inside of our mechanic
breasts.

O those eternal flowers! those thin spiry stalks
through whose invisible veins courses up the green life
blood! O those countless diversities, and for ever sum-
less expressions and beauties of nature! O—stretching
above us—all ye vast fields of heaven! blue as the very
ultimate floor of divinity—throbbing with stars or
worlds as through the intensity of the all-exultant, all,
even, *violently* God-declaring life! Oh, all ye thousand
visible wonders, that scatter spells, as of the fruitful
finest, brightest magic, through all this most invisibly-
populous universe! this universe, whether of man's
mind or of the larger macrocosm. Pronounce—ye that
know—whether evil, or meanness, or wresting to false
purpose; whether aught of bad should profane a
theatre of grandeur so immense! Is not man, himself
—*as he would seem so desirous of making himself*—the
blot upon this excellence; the lie to all this overpower-
ing sublimity? Is he not, himself (to speak to him the
language which he may best understand), the *bankrupt*
in this myriad of banks? whence *thought* draweth her
inexhaustible supplies? Were gold ribs created as the
very framework of the world, and were they torn out of
their mighty sockets; were even the Genius of the
Riches shown, barless and central, throned in his in-

tolerable light at the very heart of this, so detestably, because so for its material glory worshipped globe; and were he exposed, in a single revelation, at once in all his imperially blasting splendours—would, Oh thou creeping craven heart! thou seller of thy possible seat amidst the star-girt saints! thou wretched contemner of the chance offered thee, for thy rescue hence, by thy God! rebel to Christ's heavenly care of thee, and Christ's death for thee: would (confess, thou mad, besotted man), would thy very hugest heap of wretched gold match in value with the tiniest trampled flower, into whose thirsty cup the heaven-missioned spirit poured the eternal dew—christening and reviving into immortality? Art! what is art to the wonderful reticulation of the *fungus*? what is it to the finespun tracery of the meanest moss? Labour! what is thy labour (that thou shouldst pride thyself upon it), when the whole frame of stars be nightly moved? Pride! what be thy pride, when, to the lily of the field, even Solomon, in all his glory, is declared not equal? What be thy stars and rags and ribbons—thy rings and spots and heraldic dots—when, than all, the snake hath better? What be thy braveries when the summer-insect (less than thee, this “painted child of dirt”) surpasseth thee at them? What be thy money, when, greatly as thou reckonest it thy boast and thine ornament, it may not spot for thee even as small gold nails, thy last house, thy coffin? There, all thy rich metal useless, art thou content to put up with most ignoble metal, common lead. It is as if a man should be considered in his senses who walked all day in rooms of astonishing magnificence, and who retired to sleep at night, in his very vault. Thou leavest all thy wealth, all thy goods and chattels, and perhaps all that thou hast of soul; and, at that so sudden summons, thou standest not even solitary at last, having thy *misspent life* thee to confront. Thou hast bargained away thine heritage, and thou hast already spent the price. And, now, as that as which to be it hath been thy greatest boast (a “good man of business”), thou must—in rendering up thyself—perform justly thine own part of the bond. If the law be that life to come is alone to be

purchased by good deeds, then, as any lawyer will tell thee, friend—thou hast mistaken sense and the law. Better a single virtuous deed than a thousand money-triumphs. Better, for thee, the prayer of the beggar, than a whole waggonload of testimonials or a whole shipload of plate, and an *avenue* of bowing servitors. Perhaps “the very conveyances of thy lands” may be not to be thrust “into that box” in which there is found, at last, by far too much room for the possessor himself.

When all the world crieth out that this be true, shalt thou, then, persevere in so hopeless a chase? Shalt thou, with this knowledge, strain for an imagined good, which, even in thine own hand, melteth? Shalt thou, with this conviction that all experience attests, still sleep the sleep of fools? Shalt thou waste thy precious hours in the pursuit of those anticipated fine things? which, for all thy knowledge to the contrary, are to prove as daggers to thee? If missing *thee* in the involvements of thy success, perhaps to prove nets and pits to catch those to whom thou leavest them when thou diest—those that thou fancied best beloved, best cared-for.

Get thyself to thy knees, quick, thou foolish man! Confess thyself a very child—aye, more than a child—in the True Wisdom. Recall thy mind to better things than thy wretched traffic in the shops and the ways of the world; in which by far too much thou imitatest the muckworm. Make much of the holy affections which—like flowers—heaven hath planted in the mind of thee (if thou, like an ox, wouldst not tread them so daily out with thy brutish feet), and of thy children. Each of thine innocent little family contradicteth thee, those little bright things thou hast brought into this dirty world. Thine own youth is that which the most successfully exposeth thy mistaken, false policy. Think that thou hast but the poorest portion of real life in thy present world’s life. Thy widest margin of profit in thy ledgers, and thy very *mound* of bonds and of bank-notes, alike shall prove but suffocation—aye, but as tons of dead weight—in the hour of thy natural affliction,

and in thy minute of death! Chains are wealth—aye, chains of heaviest, closest link (hell-forged, but self-wound) of which, for its escape, in the last hour, the toiling angels have, perhaps, laboriously to free the struggling soul. The blessings of the orphan, and of the widow—of the down-trodden poor, and of the rescued—shall be the only ultimate wings upon which, in triumph out of thy grave, canst thou mount to the face of God. Then to thy heart shall reach, and in thine ear shall pour that blessed assurance: that promise of the Lord—“Even as thou didst thy saving good to the meanest of these, hast thou done it unto Me!”

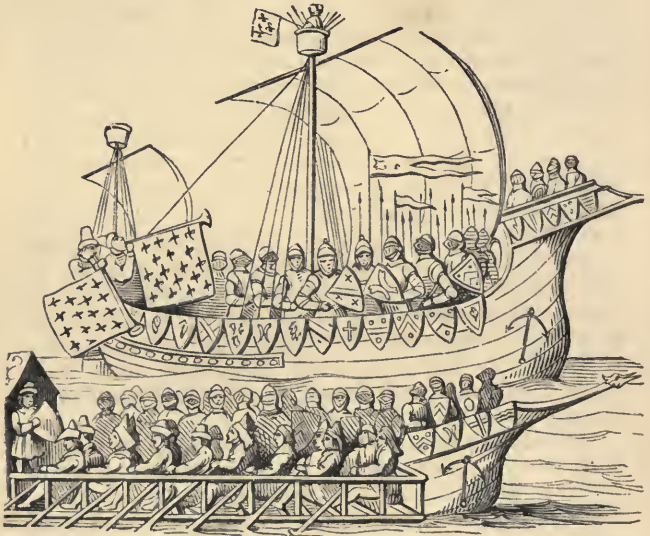
Perhaps no more distinct and hard-hearted impersonation of the love of money, and the mad estimation of its value above all other values, could be furnished than Mr. Merle, a wealthy merchant of the City of London. His whole life and pleasure was business. And his entire heaven—for he knew no other heaven—were bills, bonds, money in the bank, shares, a superb estate in the country and a magnificently-furnished house in town; with a number of moneyed men, like himself, to entertain as friends, and persons aristocratically connected, to boast-of as “his” connection. As, indeed (with which latter class) he wished himself to be thought allied, in some way, in his family line.

And this present part of our story supplies another instance of the appearance of the mysterious COIN, which seems to produce wonderful effects among the people.

A young woman of great beauty, after prolonged efforts—overcoming the denial of one or two half-respectful, but puzzled, hesitating servants—gains access to an old white-headed gentleman seated in his library, who had even *bolted the door*, as if to effectually preclude admittance; although to his own daughter. His eyes were cold, clear, and cruel, his manner proud and repellent, and his face was marked all over with the unamiable lines of business vanity and of avarice. The young woman—a *wife*—but having married against her father’s consent—stands, as a culprit, before her parent. She throws off her hat, casts herself at his feet, begins to weep and sob wildly, strives to seize his hand—

which was drawn back; to fix his eye. But she is repulsed; at first with hardness—lastly with fierce anger. And with want of heart even in the anger; for the father was reading the newspaper all the while.

“Go! I know you not. Depart to your husband! You have chosen your husband. Be poor; since you have chosen to be poor. My house shall be no asylum



Sir Simon D'Aumerle (ancestor of Mr. Merle), sailing with King Henry the Fifth to the conquest of France.

for beggars.” And Mr. Merle, for that was the man, rose and pulled his bell sharply—the door opened. “Show Mrs. Sebright out,” said he, when his servant appeared.

“I cannot go,” she pleaded, rising, crying, to her feet. “My two children are in the worst extremity. I beg, oh father, not for myself, but for them. Oh they will die. Their father is tossing on the wild sea, and he

knows not of their misery. Or (on the sea) would he die to think of it.”

“Where he carries my curse,” broke in Mr. Merle. “Leave my house! You have chosen your husband, I tell you. Here you lived, once, in luxury, and you see what your disobedience has brought you. You might have gained me new friends, obtained me new connections—I mean valuable connections. You might have prospered in a marriage I proposed to you. If there be any strength in vows, I will assist you in nothing. I am even degraded before my servants in your thus shabbily coming to my house. Do you remember (woman) that your ancestors have been among the first of men of mark in England? That one of my name—once yours—fought and fell at the Battle of Hastings?”

This last was apparently said for the benefit of a spruce gentleman-visitor, who was introduced into Mr. Merle’s presence at the moment. The father suddenly went on—“Indeed, Mr. Halliday, it is true. You can read all about it in the Peerage—though I don’t value these things at all. His name was Simon D’Aumerle—which has been abbreviated (in my time) simply into *Merle*; my own name. These things are unimportant to people of sense; but they mean something in the world after all. My ancestor was a baron, or held, at all events, some high command in the army of William the Conqueror. I don’t usually trouble my head with such matters; but I have been told all the story. And our ancestor was buried in Battle Abbey—a famous place, I believe, though I have never seen it. You have inspected the ruins, Mr. Halliday, I dare say. Many people go to view them. And now, if you please, I am at your service. About that business upon which you have come.” Mr. Merle grew slightly agitated. “Close the door, William.”

Clara Sebright was bowed out. But the servants were more pitiful than their master. Indeed one of the boldest of them—(by nature, and from office)—the housekeeper—went to seek Mr. Merle afterwards with the hope of moving him to some compassion. She returned, by-and-by; after much begging, with bright

looks and a half-sovereign and four crown-pieces; which she was commissioned to give to the unfortunate young lady, more to get rid of her than through natural pitying motive. And one of these crown-pieces, of equal apparent thickness, was the mysterious OLD COIN; unknowingly slipped in some manner among the four five-shilling-pieces as change.

It worked its mischief. Its spell stung. That living eternal curse which it bore, found matter upon which to work, humanly, soon.

Clara Sebright's very poor apartment received her. She bought food—necessaries;—bestirred herself, with new hope at this so hardly wrung gift of her father's. She could sing, too, quietly that night in the hope of better fortune; for thirty shillings was a good deal of money. Her eyes gathered new brightness at the glad looks of her little children—a boy and a girl. And even a little canary-bird that trilled in her mean but clean room was looked-to with greater assurance of hope than before.

Two days afterwards her eldest child—the boy—lost his spirit to play, and could hardly stir. He was a beautiful child, with eyes bright blue and merry. Sometimes in the light his eyes were as blue as the pavement of heaven, and radiant as the ways of Paradise itself. He was seized with a strange wearing sickness. The rich bloom faded from his round red cheek. His little eyes became hollow. He was altogether changed, as if with some blight in the circulation.

“You must seek some doctor, my dear,” said a kind woman, named Martha Pagburn, who was a neighbour living on the floor above. “I would not answer for the child's life if he be not instantly looked to. What have you done with that queer five-shilling piece (all blurred and worn) which the people would not take, and which you showed me?”

“I remember, now, I gave it to little Alexander to play with for a whole afternoon,” replied Mrs. Sebright. “I took it away from him afterwards, because there came a large white place, that shone like silver in the palm of his hand, and because I thought (besides) that

it might be good money, spite of the rejection of it by the shopkeepers, and by the people I offered it to."

The doctor, who next came and saw the child, laughed much when he was told (by the fearing mother) of this incident of the apparent absurd metal-poisoning by the unaccountable *PIECE OF SILVER*. His little hands were examined. But the child's palm and arm, both (soon) astonished. The doctor shook his head, and evidently did not understand the case; which, indeed, might well



St. Chrysostom—the child "borne across the gulf" by the Saint and Prophet.

have puzzled wiser professors of the healing science than Mr. Meldrum (for that was his name), surgeon, apothecary, and proprietor of a specific for the toothache. Or—to rise higher—it might have puzzled even the whole College of Physicians.

A white leaden spot—dry and hard—was spreading into shining over the poor child's face. Time went on. There seemed some unaccountable dry poisoning. He grew a dreadful object. Consumption—atrophy—poison of some unheard-of sort was guessed, and guessed again, as the cause of the little child's decline. His limbs became shrunk, hard, and white, of a strange metallically consistence—his flesh perished; indurated. He shrank

and visibly wasted. A preternatural, "white-metal" brilliancy grew spreading over his arms, which, when touched, were—(wild to say) as it may seem—cold to the hand as icy silver. His little face—apart from the terror which it inspired—became a curiosity. It minted visibly into the withered-faced semblance of some little Hindoo metal-god, or as a pagod of a strange Eastern minuteness, with two sparks of garnets for eyes. Astonished gazers could only look. The case—misrepresented and misdescribed to a great extent—found its way into the medical papers. People laughed. There was talk, there was speculation for a time; and then all was either given over as a strange natural fact, or denied as a lie. Nay, the whole thing was exclaimed against as an imposition to gain money on the part of the protectors of the child. Meantime—natural or induced by some powerful counter-medicines for a time—a singular new feature of the case, which proved its climax, developed. This was a crumbling away of the bones in the limbs in the almost miraculous form of minute metallic crystals—silver crystals; the decay growing again in its own power as of intense reproduction. But ere much of this unheard-of disease* had held its way in the dissolution of the body, the life of the poor little creature of course yielded. The unfortunate child (as if struck by an impossible poison, or bought wholly over to the genius of money in the guise of that fatal COIN), collapsed and decayed, in its small development; as a white withered flower dries into silver powder. And he rendered up his little breath into the air. As a lily might, which fell victim to the breath of some silver glossy snake, sparkling, frightful, in his metal skin. And there was a Snake, indeed, in these bad influences—in this money-poison; although a magic one.

But brighter days were in store soon for the (at first) inconsolable mother. Her husband returned;—fortunate, prosperous. The cloud passed away from over her path. And the heaped-up wealth of her cruel

* A disease known, however, to some physicians as *cancer argenteus*, or "silver cancer."

father—cruel from that sinister consecration of him by the icy-gold hands of the Gorgeous Mammon—fell, at his speedy death, into blessed human hands; which knew well and virtuously how to make use of the trash afterwards.

And the wild stories which, in the farther invisible transit and circulation of the Coin, and the accounts that in the fulfilment of its baleful purpose intervene between the preceding instance of the Coin's power and the next succeeding episode of its terrible devil-life are blank as regards illustration in this history just at this period.

But in comparison to intervals which will occur (hereafter) in the story of this enchanted piece of money, the lapse between this present period and the scene of the events upon which the curtain next rises is inconsiderable. Separated (alone) by a generation, it is still contemporaneous in the memory of many; recollected also in the public events recorded, or referred to, in the preceding parts of our magic memoir.

We pass back to a pre-appearance of the condemned Piece of Silver in the course of the Peninsular War, maintained by England against France.





BOOK THE FOURTH.

CHAPTER THE FIRST.

THE TWENTY-THIRD DRAGOONS. TIME—1809.

A FEW days previous to the great and decisive Battle of Talavera, a squadron of Dragoons were seen cautiously descending a steep mountain-slope, down the sides of which, and seen and lost occasionally amidst its acres of olives, was a horse-path; rugged, however, with the stones tracing out its serpentine course, and in places overhung with rocks, which, with the foliage, formed luxuriant arches blooming with innumerable many-coloured wild flowers. The sun was brightness itself in the hot sky, and he poured, every now and then, down a flood of golden glory. But there were great clouds sweeping across the intense blue, occasionally, which at times spread a purple belt or barrier before the sun's beams, and gloomed the lands and plantations lying, at great depth below the cavalry-detachment, which now and then glittered at points of its line.

"A bad path and rocky," said one of the soldiers to a comrade with light moustaches and a florid face, but with a good-natured expression as he looked from one side to the other.

"You may say that, Tom," returned the trooper. "And hot, too, as Africa," he continued, as he removed his cap and passed his white-gauntleted hand across his brows, as if he suffered great inconvenience. "Something different, this mountain goat-track, to a

fine road in Lancashire, now, with the mail-coach bowling along with the horn blowing; like a billiard-ball of a coach."

"Ah, poor Lancashire! and Old England!" sighed Harry Wilson, the first speaker. "'Twill be many a long day before we see either of them, Tom, my friend."

"We must first clear the roads in front of us of these Frenchmen, Harry. Before we clap sabre in scabbard and think of home, time will be long and weary."

"And who did you 'leave behind you,' Tom? And who do you expect to 'return safe home to,' as the old song says?" observed Harry Wilson, in a rough but an affectedly gay tone. There was some mournfulness to be caught as he dropped his last word with a faltering and sad long intonation. And he was leaning back and slightly bending over towards Tom in an involuntary attitude, as it were, of sympathy; and of a sudden and sentimental warming of a good affectionate heart towards him.

"No—*girl*, if that be your meaning, Harry. Though I dare say *you* have a girl 'left behind you,' and you are thinking of her. I have left my old mother behind me, and she has nobody to think of or care for her—God bless her—except me. For my father is dead; and all of my family, except she and me, are dead."

"Quiet, men!—no talking," broke in the short, stern voice of an officer; as he caught the murmur of the soldiers' conversation at a distance.

At this moment Captain Temple came sweeping by at a hand-gallop, with his accoutrements clattering. "Forward, Sergeant Draper," he called out to a fine, tall, sturdy, large-chested non-commissioned officer. "Forward, Sergeant Draper, with five of your men, at as quick a pace as you can manage down this steep slope, and feel our way well in front there, towards yonder village, where I fancy there may be an out-post."

He pointed, as he spoke, to a village a long way below in the valley, upon which the sun broke at the moment, brightly illuminating its group of white houses and its large white Convent amidst the trees;

and displaying many flags and streamers, and evident signs of festivity going on.

“What is going forward there, I wonder?” said



He pointed as he spoke to a village a long way below in the valley.

Thomas Desborough, in a low voice, to his comrade Harry. “Don’t you hear some faint sounds of music?”

“Some *fête*, or saint’s day, or fair. They are always at something or other of their tomfoolery. Hark! that does not sound much like jollity or fun, though,”

Harry added, as the low boom of a cannon came sullenly, faintly rumbling; and then the distant report went rolling and distributing away as it were in many echoes amidst the tops, and in the hollows, of the mountains round about.

“A distant gun among the hills,” said Tom. “That means *battle*. We shall have it to-morrow morning, or I’m a Dutchman.”

“Press forward, Sergeant Draper,” called Captain Temple. “Direct your eyes well about you to see what that gun means. There is combat somewhere, and enemy’s patrols must be about us.”

All remained now quiet for some time. Then there were two or three very remote cannon-shots; which seemed carried overhead in the air to a distance in the rear.

It was sundown before Captain Temple’s advanced squadron of Dragoons (in Captain Temple’s own particular troop, of which both Harry Wilson and Thomas Desborough were privates) reached the village which they had descried from the top of the hill, far below them, hours before, with its flags and festal decoration. It was found in a state of gay bustle and of disturbance—almost of tumult—from some country fair or celebration. Whether the jollity of a fair, or of a saint’s day, was the rule of the day it was not at first easy to determine. The villagers, in their holiday dresses, were in the streets. There was the *cura*, and a troop of black-gowned ecclesiastics—now, however, with flowers stuck in their flapped hats and cassocks—enjoying themselves heartily, and making merry with the people. There was all the variety of Spanish dances at every turn. Guitars tinkled, even *clattered*, with resonant or with loose strings, and castanets chirped and chattered. Music formed the centre of various groups of countrypeople, all determined, apparently, to make the most of their day of pleasure. Indeed the now well-ascertained nearness of a very large body of French soldiers did not seem to disturb these—for the time—light-hearted, rustic Spaniards.

As the British cavalry trooped clattering into the

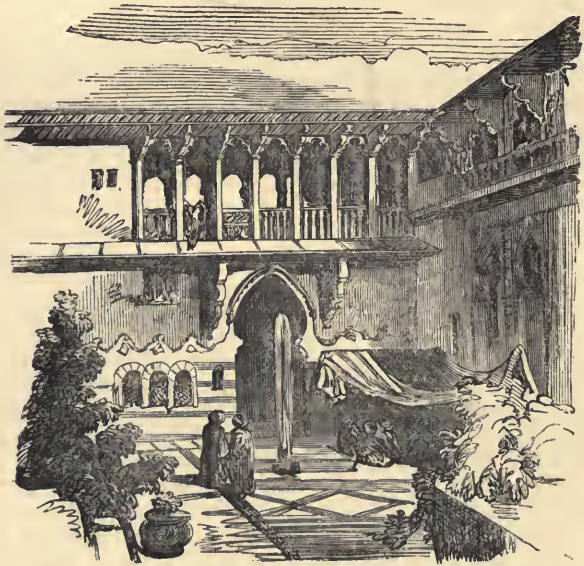
village, all the people stared with marks of considerable curiosity, and with some fear. With horses trampling over the stone pavement of the principal street, and with sabres and pouches clashing and bumping as metal rang on metal, and case on case, went Captain Temple's men, searching for drink and for quarters. But the temporary wonder at, or even the fear of the *Inglese* soon yielded to a boisterous welcome, and to salutations, and to fraternisation, which were more emphatic and joyous than altogether beseemed the discipline of the military force. For a few leagues only separated them from the outposts of the vigilant enemy, whose patrols might be even in close vicinity—perhaps grasping rein at those shouts of reception in the village to look them up.

But in the village itself the trumpets soon sounded a halt. And the proper patrols were sent searching all along the paths; in order to feel out the precise whereabouts of this unseen enemy, and to discover the meaning of the cannon-fire which was heard as the cavalry descended from the mountain to the village.

The troopers (under leave) after linking bridle and picqueting their horses in the principal street—even stabling some of them in the sheds and covered buildings amongst the neighbouring olive-plantations—sought refreshment for themselves in the village houses and booths, where they soon made themselves free. They called for the best wine which the vintners could produce; and they were scattering their money about with true martial carelessness.

At the chief inn or *posada* of the place there was some more important entertainment going forward. This amusement seemed provided for the better order of the people. All exhibitions of the popular order being almost exclusively in the hands of the Gipsies in Spain at that time—indeed it is greatly, also, the case at this date—when Harry Wilson and his friend, Thomas Desborough, pressed in at the head of the crowd of soldiers, they were no way surprised to find the place nearly already occupied. And this place was filled with a party of Gitanos displaying all sorts of feats of

jugglery—some of which were very remarkable. The Gipsies were telling fortunes, and otherwise amusing the astonished countrypeople. Some of these Gipsies, who had an eye to business, were, during the intervals, profitably occupying their time in offering bargains with all sorts of things; and they availed of all favourable opportunities to recommend strongly their stores to more ready belief, and to more good-natured and



At the chief inn or *posada* of the place there was some more important entertainment going forward.

leisurely notice, as the opened hearts of the entertained people grew warm. A regular catalogue of things vaunted as precious, and of goods really useful or supposed to be so, was published, pedlar-wise, by this trading part of the Gitano crew; who were as, was likely, the busiest.

“Here! a bottle of your yellow wine—good let it be,” called aloud Thomas Desborough. “I want to see if any of these pedlar-gentlemen have anything worth my money. We have such pedlars in England. And I intend to take something curious to my country, if the Signor Don Spaniards have anything to sell me, or to give me, or to fill my pockets with. Have any of you brown-faced gentlemen that to part with, wherewithal I can astonish mine own people? I like to make folks stare. As for Frenchmen’s buttons and gorgets, they are by far too plentiful with us of the cavalry—traps and trash, and trinkets off the field, we English are sick of. Besides, such are mere spoils of war—the thistle-fluff and blown poppy-leaves, as it were, of the bloody war-wheat-field. And I do not want quite to terrify my old house at home and the old folks.”

“By Mars, my brother, whose red livery you British wear—worn worthily I would swear—I have something that will please you.” This was said by a very sinister-looking Gipsy, with a face the colour of the inside of a boot and with eyes which might almost have been called *green* like a cat’s. He wore a dark green woollen cloak, with hooks no less precious than of silver. And he looked with such a penetrating, sullen kind of glance, that he might have frightened some sensitive people. This Gipsy spoke very tolerable English. “I have that,” said he to Desborough, “which shall make you a man; if you are not a great one already.”

“You are no beauty, if you are a man, at all events,” said Desborough, looking him full in the face and loudly laughing. “You can’t make me more of a man than I am, friend; for I’m in the Twenty-Third British Dragoons, and that’s manhood-warrant for Sampson or for Hercules. ‘Trooper Desborough’ is my name, who has done something with the sword. But what mean you (my friend with the queer eyebrows) with your manhood—and your words?”

“I mean that which I did say unto you,” replied the Gitano. “Know you old curious things? This is an antique medal,” he went on, producing a large SILVER COIN, but much defaced and worn. “This is a coin of

your own country—Signor Englishman—as your Consul at Cadiz, to whom I showed it, affirmed to me; but he may be wrong. You will be brave and fortunate if you possess it. I tell it by my Gipsy powers. You disbelieve me? Stoop down and let me whisper. I have a thing to tell you."

The soldier bent his ear. The Gitano whispered a



A Bolero danced at the *Fête* in the midst of the soldiers and people.

word or two. Desborough raised his head instantly, staring with the utmost astonishment at the Gipsy.

"By all the saddles and bridles in the whole world!" cried Desborough, when he had recovered his breath, "but—Are you the devil?"

"I scarcely look like him," said the Gipsy, smiling, "whatever truth I tell. But you will believe me, now, because you cannot help it. Buy my silver-piece. But my price is high for it."

"High? I should think it was high, for it!" replied

Desborough, not yet recovered from his astonishment. "If it comes from such a source the thing must be miraculous; and, therefore, invaluable. But what do you name as your high price? If it be contained within the bounds of a private trooper's fortune, I'll have that odd piece of money, cost what it will."

"I tell you that it *will* prove of the utmost consequence to you," said the Gipsy, dubiously.

"By my horse's four shoes, then, but I must have it. If it is to be of such consequence to me, and if, through it, I am to be brave and fortunate, the sooner it is in my possession the better. For to be brave and fortunate and to command a troop is my whole wish—that is, honestly. Besides, it is a fine thing in itself, this strange old COIN! See how it glitters, and what a strange thing it is."

"I do not see it glitter," said Harry Wilson drily. So said the others.

"Not see it glitter?" echoed Desborough. "Why I cannot see for it! And I cannot move my eyes from it. You must be purblind not to see it shine so—you must be fools!"

"Take it in your hand, then, and look closer at it," cried the Gipsy, leering.

"Don't part with it, Sixtos Quercos," said an old Zingaro, whose hair was white as wool, to the man who offered for sale this singular COIN. "'Tis precious for the strange things it can do; and it ought not to go out of our band."

"As how?" asked Desborough, taking the COIN in his hand. At that instant a faint flash, but visible to all in the room, irradiated the chamber for a moment. And a very long time afterwards came an exceedingly distant report, as if of the low rumble of the very remotest cannon far under the horizon.

"Why this is as odd as our Merry-Andrew trumpeter, who blows on horseback on his head with his heels in the air!" called Wilson, aloud, again and again starting, in the extremity of his surprise, from his seat, but with a laugh. "That gun must have been at least four leagues off, and yet we saw the flash distinctly—yes, in

this room, as if it had been fired just outside the door. There's magic here, and devils."

"I'll buy this queer silver piece of money. I'll buy it. Ha, ha! I feel quite happy. I feel so strange and joyous; but I am not drunk."

"I never saw such a strange thing in my life!" cried Thomas Desborough, getting very flushed and quite excited, as if with wine—but he was perfectly sober. "Brave and fortunate! Why this old mad PIECE OF SILVER would be cheap at a good English ten-pound note!"

"Throw for it," said Sixtos Quercos, "friend *Inglese*. Wager this good old gold watch of thine against it. And, if thou winnest, thou shalt have the gold watch back and the COIN for nothing. If you lose, I keep both COIN and watch. Is it a bargain, good friend Englishman?"

"No, I cannot part with the watch," said Thomas, closing his hand over it; and this with sudden seeming anxiety and with much fear. "There's a great deal in this watch. 'Twas given me by my mother in her great pride. And poor old dame! she spent half her little worldly store, I believe, to buy it for me, when I left her. This is sacred!"

"Thou'lt win—thou'lt win," whispered the old Gipsy, slyly, on one side of Desborough. "Be bold, and throw and win. Do not be afraid of old tales and old women."

"Say'st thou so, old friend with the leather face? Well, I feel certain that I *shall* win—sure of it. Though I can't tell why. So here goes; and I'll risk my watch to try and get that strange thing."

"Toss with the thing itself," suggested Wilson. "Here's the Great Mogul's head or an old emperor's face upon it, with an eye like an eagle's and a crown of laurel. So have with it! Heads or tails is our English way of gambling and tossing, Master Gipsy. And, by your leave, we'll toss face or letters, or heads or tails, or woman or man."

"There are letters on the wrong side of it," said Desborough, looking delightedly upon the coin. "But

'twould puzzle a conjurer to read them. I call heads, heads, heads."

A crowd had now gathered round the gambling soldier and the Gipsy. And amid laughter, cries, thrumming of guitars, the clank of castanets, pirouetting on the floor, and sundry English oaths from the soldiers, the toss was made.

"Heads it is! I win by the blaze itself of the silver beauty!" called Desborough in triumph.

Wilson clapped his friend on the shoulder. "Thou art lucky, lad," said he; "lucky as ever was Lancashire."

As the COIN fell lightly on the table round which their eager heads were close-gathered, trumpets sounded, startlingly to horse, suddenly in the street.

In that instant Sergeant Draper strode into the room, his sword and accoutrements clattering not much less loudly than a waggon-horse in his loose harness might, which should suddenly look in.

"Tumble out here, men, and stand by your horses! The order is come to advance, Quick—quick! Hear you not the news? Out with you all!"

As Private Desborough pulled on his gloves in a hurry, he clapped his prize between his teeth because both his hands were occupied.

"Plague on it," he suddenly cried, clearing his throat and snatching the COIN from between his teeth; "I verily believe I have swallowed a whole furnace-full of sulphur. A glass of water, or I shall be choked!"

"Swallow this tumbler of wine," cried Wilson. And he thrust a cup of wine into his friend's hand.

Desborough drained it to the last, and then began stamping about as if he were bewitched.

When he had somewhat recovered his breath he brought his sword round into its accustomed place, opened the leather mouth of his richly ornamented *sabretasche*, and dropped into it this COIN for which he had wagered, and which he had won; and which fell into the depths of his pouch.

In a short half-hour the village was two miles in the rear of the Squadron of the 23rd Dragoons to which

Thomas Desborough belonged. And their trumpets wailed that night as they went winding their way over the mountains slowly.

The result of this singular adventure may be gathered from the following. Would that the conclusion of our story were less sad or true! But we will now transfer the reader to a scene in England, and avail ourselves of the words of the eloquent English writer Thomas de Quincey; who, in an account of his mail-coach journey (at the period) traversing the roads with the news of the Battle of Talavera, relates how the travelling party of whom he formed one made a pause to change horses at a village in Lancashire through which their direct way lay on their rapid transit forward to the north; distributing the tidings of the battle as they went. He goes on to describe with minuteness how eagerly, and with what enthusiasm, the travellers were questioned by one particular poor woman, who sought news of her son; displaying the greatest anxiety to be possessed with this glorious, exciting intelligence from London; but mostly so with its results. And in all unconsciousness she inquired news which were only to prove her anguish. For this poor woman was the mother of Thomas Desborough, the Trooper of the 23rd Dragoons; and it was this poor woman to whom the soldier referred when he boasted in the inn in Spain before the Gipsies of the beautiful gold watch which had been his mother's present to the son before parting.

We now refer to Thomas de Quincey's touching account of these sad circumstances.

“Her agitation, though not the agitation of fear, but of exultation rather, and enthusiasm, had been so conspicuous when listening, and when first applying for information, that I could not but ask her if she had not some relation in the Peninsula army. Oh! yes: her only son was there. In what regiment? He was a trooper in the 23rd Dragoons. My heart sank within me as she made that answer. This sublime regiment, which an Englishman should never mention without raising his hat to their memory, had made the most memorable and effective charge recorded in military

annals. They leaped their horses—*over* a trench; where they could *into* it, and with the result of death or mutilation when they could *not*. What proportion cleared the trench is nowhere stated. Those who *did*, closed up and went down upon the enemy with such divinity of fervour (I use the word *divinity* by design: the inspiration of God must have prompted this movement to those whom even then He was calling to His presence), that two results followed. As regarded the enemy, this 23rd Dragoons, not, I believe, originally 350 strong,



The famous charge of the Twenty-Third Dragoons at the battle of Talavera.

paralysed a French column, 6,000 strong, then ascending the hill, and fixed the gaze of the whole French army. As regarded themselves, the 23rd were supposed at first to have been all but annihilated; but eventually, I believe, not so many as one in four survived. And this, then, was the regiment—a regiment already for some hours known to myself and all London as stretched, by a large majority, upon one bloody aceldama—in which the young trooper served whose mother was now talking with myself in a spirit of such hopeful enthusiasm. Did I tell her the truth? Had I the heart to break up her dream? No. I said to myself, To-morrow, or the next day, she will hear the worst. For this

night, wherefore should she not sleep in peace? After to-morrow, the chances are too many that peace will forsake her pillow. She will no more remember that 'ancient tree' round which her son had played when a



Tree near his native village, under which Thomas Desborough had often played when a child.

child. This brief respite from despair, let her owe this to *my* gift and *my* forbearance. But, if I told her not of the bloody price that had been paid, there was no reason for suppressing the contributions from her son's regiment to the service and glory of the day. For the

very few words that I had time for speaking, I governed myself accordingly. I showed her not the funeral banners under which the noble regiment was sleeping. I lifted not the overshadowing laurels from the bloody trench in which horse and rider lay mangled together. But I told her how these dear children of England, privates and officers, had leaped their horses over all obstacles as gaily as hunters to the morning's chase. I told her how they rode their horses into the mists of death (saying to myself, but not saying to *her*), and laid down their young lives for thee, O mother England! as willingly—poured out their noble blood as cheerfully—as ever, after a long day's sport, when infants, they had rested their wearied heads upon their mother's knees, or had sunk to sleep in her arms. It is singular that she seemed to have no fears, even after this knowledge that the 23rd Dragoons had been conspicuously engaged, for her son's safety: but so much was she enraptured by the knowledge that *his* regiment, and therefore *he*, had rendered eminent service in the trying conflict—in this hard-fought Battle of Talavera—a service which had actually made them the foremost topic of conversation in London—that in the mere simplicity of her fervent nature, she threw her arms round my neck, and, poor woman, kissed me!”

How greatly in this impassioned story of this whirlwind of a charge on the field of Talavera—so noble, yet so slaughterous—are we reminded of that fatal afternoon of the frantic, mistaken Balaclava! Peace be with the gallant men who so grandly did their duty on that last fearfully memorable occasion! Heroically fell they victims—silent yet devoted, counting well the tremendous absurdly incommensurate chances against them, yet ungrudging! What shall be said of that haste, that besotted, false generalship, that fearful error to which they fell so irredeemably offered up? Ah! that field shall tell its bitter story of wasted valour to the ears of less unthinking generations than to our present indulgently careless one. That day of mistakes—that glorious but mad Balaclava—that horse charge—is past. And the tears of England alone remain sanctify-

ing the memories of her sacrificed—her martial, murdered children, in one cruel sense.

Poor woman of this true story of the mail-coach traveller, and of the village in Lancashire! was it that thy unfortunate son—falling in this tremendous charge of the gallant 23rd—was it that he was the hero of that adventure with the Spanish Gipsies? Did that *one* in the ranks of the heroes of the cavalry—thy dearest one—fall in the full glory of his divine valour, on the red field of Talavera? Honours to the slaughtered dead! dying for their country.

Honours to the living! But tenfold honours to those whose graves are in the field!





CHAPTER THE SECOND.

THE CASTAWAY.

A GROUP in one of the bye-streets of Paris were stopping to remark carelessly upon a poor woman, who, grasping the youngest of two little—and once, doubtless, beautiful—children, was stretched (apparently in the last stage of meagre famine) on the doorstep of a large, dark, stone mansion. Her thin form, wasted to tenuity, and her pallid features, told a tale of suffering which melted the heart of, even, the rough people who passed and repassed in the crowd. They seemed agitated by most important political events—then possibly in act, or by a catastrophe in expectation, or in that moment disclosing its terrors.

“Poor woman, she is sped,” said one. “I would not give two hours’ purchase of her life. She has gone the way of starvation.”

“Ah, Bon Dieu! But what will become of the two poor little innocent children then?” said a woman.

“Let her alone. Do not tease her. Permit that she die quietly,” said a passing workman, named Mathieu Dumont, as a less considerate fellow-townsmen sought to open her face to the view, and to disclose her bosom thoroughly by removing her arm from before it, and by raising her eyelid curiously with his finger, to see if she yet lived.

“We waste time. On,” said a grey-headed man in the garb of a soldier, by name Simon de Varenne. “You waste your pity here. There will be much more need for pity very soon. The heat shall be hotter—horrible sights there shall be more.”

A grave, dignified-looking man, with the port of a nobleman (but dressed simply in dark clothes, and with his greyish hair tied in a black ribbon) approached. He made his way quietly through the crowd, and knelt down on one knee as he sought to raise the prostrate form of this dying miserable woman. There was thoughtful



House inhabited by Louis Ranot in the outskirts of Paris.

kindness, but high pride, in every one of his movements.

The elder of the two children—a boy of about seven years of age—now began to cry, “O, mother!—*ma mère, ma mère!*” And he threw himself on the inanimate body, weeping bitterly, and clutching at his mother.

“Stay, my child! You prevent my good offices,”

gently remonstrated the last comer, removing the child.

"Monsieur Raoul de Nièvre, Comte de l'Ardennes,* excuse my recognising you," said a workman, after a pause, standing by, whose name was Louis Ranot. "Though you have a title, you are safe with us. And your humanity is well known."

"Give me no titles," said the dignified individual thus addressed. "I have done with titles for ever. Rather let us address ourselves to this case of frightful distress. Poor creature! I trust that she is not dead. Her attitude is terrible."

"Ah, Heaven have pity on her," answered Louis Ranot. "But action is always better than mere useless words of compassion. Do you, if you please, monsieur, raise the mother, while I endeavour to restrain this passion of tears of these two little children. Ah me, it is a sad sight! Curses on the nobility, that drive poor women to this. She is some lost one. Poor betrayed girl."

Raoul de Nièvre did, indeed, try to lift the woman. But when, in his efforts to do so, her face was turned to meet his, and came close, he uttered a cry of horror; the loosened grasp accompanying which cry permitted his burthen to fall. He staggered against the stone wall, and he endeavoured to support himself by one hand against it. He had recognised one but too well known in that helpless form. And now a groan escaped him that pierced every hearer's heart. A spasm crossed his face.

"Ah, day of torment!" he at last ejaculated. "Was this the agony reserved for me? To meet—in *this* place, and at a time like this! O that the stones would gape and swallow me, or that I could flee!"

"*Monsieur* is ill—agitated," said the woman whose pity was the first to be excited by the sad scene. She laid her hand on Raoul's arm; and, indeed, she wept at that direful spectacle presented by the poor woman and her helpless orphans and the suffering of Raoul.

* See *ante*, page 81—the history of Catherine Wentworth and Scatterworth.

“Look you, Louis Ranot. Would you believe it?” said Pierre Grisseau, a stonemason. “The poor wretch has really a **PIECE** of **MONEY** firmly clutched between her finger and thumb. Take it—or I will. Silver is for the living—lead is for the dead!”

“Laugh not that grim laugh, friend Grisseau. We have evils and wrongs enough to sustain—we of this unfortunate Paris, without jesting. We must not joke upon the extremities of poor *miserables like that.*”

This circumstance of the unfortunate woman still having money in her hand was true. For though evidently reduced to the most pitiable state of destitution—herself and her orphans—for want of bread, yet some compassionate passenger had probably relieved her wants; and she had doubtless sunk to the pavement when hurrying to exchange that precious **COIN** for still more precious bread.

“She is some woman of the streets—some castaway,” said a cold-looking little man with a sneer.* “Every one can see which way the poor thing’s steps have gone. But she has been lovely in her sin. Eh, *messieurs*, what can we do in this queer world? Two more brats. Two more——”

And he would have added a very injurious term to apply to the poor, perhaps dead, creature, if a trembling but a very earnest hand had not (with great display of agitated indignation) been laid on his lips.

“Cease, reviler! cease, thou cruel traducer. So quick in aspersions upon the unfortunate.” It was Monsieur de Nièvre who interposed, and thus spoke. “Thou knowest not what thou sayest, or to whom thou sayest it. Brave not the anger of a moved, defiant man, who well knows how to revenge if he be insulted. Most know Raoul de Nièvre. Though she—I speak of this poor one at thy feet—shall have lost all—even, in your base, malignant mind, the grace and the pardon of Heaven itself—still is she dear to some, to *one!* ’Tis I to whom she is dear—to whom she is reconciled, now, through these her very depths of hopeless misery. I,

* Robespierre—then unknown.

who once—in my prepossessions, and my hatred—gave her over to torments—now—knowing better—recall as fiercely my so mad malediction! Rage and disgust at those who wronged her—those who were of my own class, and who are our tyrants—filled my mind wholly. Ah, that which has made me what I am, *that* can never be forgiven! The tempest hath indeed overtaken thee—poor lamb—stretched on these pitiless stones. Cold thou art as that monument that I shall raise to thee! Marguerite de Nièvre, it is I—it is thy father! Count once; raging democrat now. It is I who thus bid thee rise! clasp thee—recalling thee to life in the very sharpest tones of his—God help me!—justifiable indignation at one time; and bitter grief. And Lo! to the charity of strangers hast thou been committed. The pavements have been thy soft pillow, and the streets have been thy home. And this chance COIN, doled out at thine extremity by some pitying, perhaps low-born stranger or wanderer! Thou of a hundred descents—daughter almost of kings! But, a curse on it, and on the giver of it. Knew he not that angels' hands were spread over thee? And that thine afflictions were appealing, for thee, at the moment at the gate of heaven? Perish this pittance for one whose blood is that of nobles! Thy ancestors fought for the recovered tomb of the world's Redeemer. Saw not the giver of this money that thy great ruin must be, alone, owing to the crime of one of these monsters who tread the necks of the people? These men of guilt and perjury, whose entire order—though it was at one time mine own—I have sworn utterly to uproot and to tear from out of the gilded sands from which the red flowers sprung.”

The woman now revived, but painfully, slowly. Her loveliness had evidently once been great. Spite of the extreme whiteness of her face, she still looked beautiful. Two or three ready hands raised her into a standing position. Two or three friendly, but rough fists placed in her grasp the hands of her children. She strained her children to her bosom and covered them with tears and kisses. Her long hair fell over their white faces

like a dark cloud. The people wept, and looked discomposed.

Mine must be the arm that, now, shall sustain thee, Marguerite. Oh, how I hated thee—sought to tear the image of my daughter from my heart! I thought thee guilty—base. I have since learned to know that thou wert alone unfortunate. I am growing old. And rage against thee shall be quelled in tears. But anger and revenge shall burn the hotter against thy seducer. The passion of vengeance shall flame, devouring, until his nobleman’s circlet be converted as into ring of hell, intensified to brightest devil’s fire, about his villain brows—starring him with the glow and marking him fiercely to perdition in my unutterable——”

“O father—father! Spare him. For my sake—for the sake of these little ones, whom to thee I now commit. For my days are not long in this world. They who have been so cruel to me—he whom I dare not name to thee—even my executioners would yield me this.”

“Oh that thou hadst never been born, thou poor trodden useless one! That it should be *thou* that I should thus meet! Thou to be the object of chance pity! That SILVER PIECE of MONEY which, in my ecstasy of rage, I snatched from out thy hand and flung into the street as a beggar-dole——”

“Was given me by a man whom I blessed then, in my great need, who, though wrapped in deep thought, and who to all appearance was suffering intolerable anguish, passed by at the moment when these little ones were as if hovering in the balance of life and death. And he yielded to my looks. For till he drew the money forth to give me, I had no words wherewith to move him.”

“Yea, and I have flung it forth. Perish thou and myself—perish all the world of which we form so insignificant a part—before thou, a daughter of my noble house, before my daughter shall accept—staining her great cause of wrong—dole, or gift, or relief, at her worst moment, from the hand of man. Child, we have done with life or petitions for pity. We die, or avenge.

Mercy will we look for alone from God! Yet I can thank the giver, who would have snatched thee—as I shall now—from perdition, in the streets; I hope from death. But our path is thick over thorns; and we must trample them, helped by one another, alone—cheered by the stars in heaven, and aided not otherwise. For men are tigers. And blood and devastation are the fruit which they—as the devil’s children—gather from out of their blooming garden of hell!”

But Raoul de Nièvre was wrong partly in his conclusions. He had not thrown away that *PIECE OF SILVER*, the gift of which to his daughter, in her forlorn and destitute condition, had so disturbed and irritated him.

A feeble old man—half crazed, and with unsettled, melancholy heavy eyes—who stood by, a witness to the hasty vengeful act, partly in silent and mechanical (almost idiotic, as it were) correction to propriety, had picked-up and brought vacantly, in his mind, back the *COIN*. And, unperceived in the crowd, and in the occupation with Raoul de Nièvre and his discovery of his daughter in the street-wanderer; during the father’s convulsion of grief, the old man dropped the *COIN* silently into his pouch—probably containing powder and ball, for it was a time of mad public excitement:—which pouch was slung by a wide, knitted belt over Raoul de Nièvre’s shoulder. It was indeed on this very day that the great Bastille was besieged, preliminary to the monstrous excesses of the French Revolution, and the turmoil which upset the throne of Louis-Seize in the year afterwards.

At this moment the drums beat, and distant cheers arose. As the remote thunder-rolling of the rising storm.

“I must not stay,” exclaimed De Nièvre. “I command a large body of revolutionists who are about to assemble for the attack. One or two of you, good friends, assist me to convey this unhappy woman and these suffering children to a place of safety: To the nearest baker’s shop, I should say, for bread; which they most need. I must hurry, for I hear that move-

ment stirring in which I am to take part. Many have this morning come forth—have risen from their lairs—who must die, but who have sworn to destroy, first, the stronghold of tyranny—to leave not one stone upon another of it. The Saints be praised for those sounds, for those drums which I hear—for that work is now afoot in which there is small fear that I shall prove a laggard. Adieu, my friends."

And the people disappeared from the spot as the groups disperse at the conclusion of a scene in the theatre; when the lights are lowered and the audience expects.





CHAPTER THE THIRD.

STORM OF THE BASTILLE.—14TH JULY, 1789.

DRUMS again beat. There was a noise of the loosening of paving-stones. The thronging of the people was the hum as if of a roaring hive. The sun fell like yellow fire upon the streets of dusty Paris. Now and then the rumble of artillery across the streets told of troops in motion. There was the murmur of a myriad of tongues, and a tramp and tread of the military.

There was commencing battle—there was now musketry with, (at short intervals,) a plumping cannon-shot. A storm of bells raged and surged over the streets and a knell struck in open spaces. A ball—rapid as light—would shave the top branches of a tree close to you, like a sharp knife. Then there would be stillness for a moment.

Amidst all the heat, dust, smoke, and fury of the deepening combat, De Nièvre bore himself like a lion. Twice with bared arms—sword in hand—and blood dripping from his brows, did he head the people—a motley mob of men, women, and children—in their furious, nay, in their frantic assault upon the flashing embrasures of the Bastille. Clouds and volleying thunder beat them back. The slit mouths, in the smooth bastioned stone, spouted flame and smoke—spoke leaden balls for fierce oaths. Crackling over all were hand guns of every description, of sorts and sizes multiform.

Just now there came in a crash a discharge from the battlements of the smoke-hidden, fire-encircled fortress. Raoul de Nièvre fought in a blue frock. He had flung

off his ammunition-belt for a moment, whilst he had drunk out of a bucket of water like the "steed of Mars," and he exchanged his coat for the loose garment which now showed black and gules all over grit with its grimy spots and daubs of red and of gunpowder. Its odour was of sulphur and of steam; and the best half of it hung in ribbons from the shot which had cut, slitting it as with scissors. He sat for a moment, with white and writhing lip, on a stone: blood dripping fast from his forehead. But in an instant, almost at a bound, he was up again. His shot-belt was slung hastily over, and he was once more ready for action. Leaning over, priming for fire, and grasping his piece at the extreme edge of the ditch of the fortress—now ringing and rattling with its multiplying cannon and musket reports—Raoul was firing furiously in the midst of a thick cloud of smoke, of which his gun, with its scorching barrel and its incessant flashes, was itself the shining centre.

But this did not last long. There was a sudden dart, like as of a rocket, through the white sheet of smoke. A musket-ball struck his pouch, rang even a clear musical "C" upon the fatal ancient SILVER PIECE of MONEY like the sharp stroke of a bell, glanced up, described almost a hieroglyph or zigzag in a trail of smoke like a sudden crook of forked lightning; and Raoul de Nièvre fell heavily to the earth. His gun tumbled clattering into the ditch, and it exploded as it struck the *cordon* of the *revêtement* in its descent.

"Marguerite—unhappy! Who is there now to take care of thee and of thine unfortunate little ones?" were the last words of the ill-fated father, as, clutching the stones in his last agony, he fell back dying.

But what was one life in the present world's business—demanding lives like hairs—then gathering into tumult—grappling as into mortal stroke? Tyranny was toppling into ruin. The steeples, with their clanging voices, were denouncing it. Insurrectionary earthquake was waking with its growls—with its mighty nervous preparatory trembling beneath the foundation of tumultuous Paris. Dominations were shrinking with dismay.

The waters of red rebellion—with the Medusa-heads of blood and of chastisement starting spectrally fast up here and there from out them—were rushing together as in the whirlpool of unutterable might. Liberty with her fierce eyes—rising out of ruins—was lifting her triumphant face to a heaven that now *bowed* to her agony; arming her interposing angels for the immutable justice! And there were constellated crowns brightening, in the skies, to fates of future martyrs, and fiery flags were waving victoriously in it for conquests yet to be, and for despotisms that were yet to be trodden-out astrologically and to disappear. The throbbing pulses of the great city were beating resistance, crushed heretofore under the heel of military repression. And the old palaces with their countless architectural windows set as in slave-dug stone and enriched with monarchical trophies, now grotesques, paled in the ardent light of that famous sanguine July morning—gold for the banners of freedom—fire for crowns and for the king's furniture of sceptres and forged "chains"—chains whether of gold for princedom or iron for prisoners.

But we shall borrow more eloquent words than ours to tell properly of this result. Whose heart does not thrill at the grand recital? Whose eyes do not glow at the wild outburst which—however dreadful—raged for good as thus:—

"All morning, since nine, there has been a cry everywhere:—To the Bastille! Repeated 'deputations of citizens' have been here, passionate for arms; whom De Launay has got dismissed by soft speeches through portholes. Towards noon, Elector Thuriot de la Rosiere gains admittance. De Launay mounts with him to the battlements: heaps of paving-stones, old iron and missiles lie piled; cannon all duly levelled; in every embrasure a cannon—only drawn back a little! Behold, O Thuriot, how the multitude flows on, welling through every street; tocsin furiously pealing, all drums beating the *générale*: the Suburb Saint Antoine rolling hitherward wholly! Such vision thou, O Thuriot, as from thy Mount of Vision, beholdest! Ever wilder swells

the tide of men; their infinite hum waxing ever louder, into imprecations, perhaps into crackle of stray musketry—which latter, on walls nine feet thick, cannot do execution. The outer drawbridge has been lowered for Thuriot; a group penetrates that way into the Outer Court: soft speeches producing no clearance of these, De Launay gives fire; pulls up his Drawbridge. A slight sputter; which has *kindled* the too combustible chaos; made it a roaring fire-chaos! Burst forth Insurrection, at sight of its own blood (for there were deaths by that splutter of fire), into endless rolling explosion of musketry, distraction, execration; and overhead, from the Fortress, let one great gun, with its grapeshot, go booming, to show what we *could* do. The Bastille is besieged!

“On, then, all Frenchmen that have hearts in their bodies! Roar with all your throats, of cartilage and metal, ye Sons of Liberty; stir spasmodically whatsoever of utmost faculty is in you, soul, body, or spirit; for it is the hour! Smite, thou Louis Tournay, cartwright of the Marais, old soldier of the Regiment Dauphiné; smite at that Outer Drawbridge chain, though the fiery hail whistles round thee! Never, over nave or felloe, did thy axe strike such a stroke. Down with it, man; down with it to Orcus: let the whole accursed Edifice sink thither, and Tyranny be swallowed up for ever! Mounted, some say on the roof of the guard-room, some ‘on bayonets stuck into joints of the wall,’ Louis Tournay smites, brave Aubin Bonnemère (also an old soldier) seconding him: the chain yields, breaks; the huge Drawbridge slams down, thundering (*avec fracas*). Glorious: and yet, alas, it is still but the outworks. The Eight grim Towers, with their Invalidés musketry, their paving-stones, and cannon-mouths, still soar aloft intact; Ditch yawning impassable, stone-faced; the inner Drawbridge with its *back* towards us: the Bastille is still to take!

“To describe this Siege of the Bastille (thought to be one of the most important in History) perhaps transcends the talent of mortals. Could one but, after infinite reading, get to understand so much as the plan

of the building! But there is open Esplanade, at the end of the Rue Saint-Antoine; there are such Fore-Courts, *Cour Avancé*, *Cour de l'Orme*, arched Gateway (where Louis Tournay now fights); then new draw-bridges, dormant bridges, rampart-bastions, and the grim Eight Towers: a labyrinthic Mass, high frowning there, of all ages from twenty years to four hundred and twenty; beleaguered, in this its last hour, as we said, by mere Chaos come again! Ordnance of all calibres; throats of all capacities; men of all plans, every man his own engineer: seldom since the war of Pygmies and Cranes was there seen so anomalous a thing. Half-pay Elie is home for a suit of regimentals; no one would heed him in coloured clothes: half-pay Hulin is haranguing Gardes Françaises in the Place de Grève. Frantic Patriots pick up the grape-shots; bear them, still hot (or seemingly so), to the Hôtel de Ville: Paris, you perceive, is to be burnt! Flesselles is 'pale to the very lips,' for the roar of the multitude grows deep. Paris wholly has got to the acme of its frenzy; whirled, all ways, by panic madness. At every street-barricade, there whirls simmering, a minor whirlpool—strengthening the barricade, since God knows what is coming; and all minor whirlpools play distractedly into that grand Fire-Mahlstrom which is lashing round the Bastille.

“And so it lashes and it roars. Cholat the wine-merchant has become an impromptu cannoneer. See Georget, of the Marine Service, fresh from Brest, ply the King of Siam's cannon. Singular (if we were not used to the like) Georget lay, last night, taking his ease at his inn; the King of Siam's cannon also lay, knowing nothing of *him*, for a hundred years. Yet now, at the right instant, they have got together, and discourse eloquent music. For, hearing what was toward, Georget sprang from the Brest diligence, and ran. Gardes Françaises also will be here, with real artillery: were not the walls so thick! Upwards from the Esplanade, horizontally from all neighbouring roofs and windows, flashes one irregular deluge of musketry—without effect. The Invalides lie flat, firing comparatively at

their ease from behind stone: hardly, through port-holes, show the tip of a nose. We fall, shot; and make no impression.

“Let conflagration rage; of whatsoever is combustible. Guard-rooms are burnt, Invalides mess-rooms. A distracted ‘Peruke-maker with two fiery torches’ is for burning ‘the saltpetres of the Arsenal;’ had not a woman run screaming; had not a Patriot, with some tincture of Natural Philosophy, instantly struck the wind out of him (butt of musket on pit of stomach), overturned barrels, and stayed the devouring element. A young beautiful lady, seized escaping in these Outer Courts, and thought falsely to be De Launay’s daughter, shall be burnt in De Launay’s sight; she lies swooned on a palliasse: but again a Patriot, it is brave Aubin Bonnemère, the old soldier, dashes in, and rescues her. Straw is burnt; three cartloads of it, hauled hither, go up in white smoke: almost to the choking of Patriotism itself; so that Elie had, with singed brows, to drag back one cart; and Rèole, the ‘gigantic haberdasher,’ another. Smoke as of Tophet; confusion as of Babel; noise as of the Crack of Doom!

“Blood flows; the aliment of new madness. The wounded are carried into houses of the Rue Cerisaie; the dying leave their last mandate not to yield till the accursed Stronghold fall. Deputations, three in number, arrive from the Hôtel de Ville. These wave their Town-flag in the arched Gateway; and stand rolling their drums; but to no purpose. In such Crack of Doom, De Launay cannot hear them, dare not believe them: they return, with justified rage, the whistle of lead still singing in their ears. The firemen are here, squirting with their fire-pumps on the cannon, to wet the touch-holes; they unfortunately cannot squirt so high; but produce only clouds of spray. Individuals of classical knowledge propose *catapults*. Sansterre, the sonorous Brewer of the Suburb Saint-Antoine, advises rather that the place be fired, by a ‘mixture of phosphorus and oil of turpentine spouted up through forcing-pumps.’ O Spinola Sansterre, hast thou the mixture *ready*? Every man his own engineer! And

still the fire-deluge abates not ; even women are firing. Gardes Françaises have come : real cannon, real cannoneers. Usher Maillard is busy ; Elie, Hulin rage in the midst of thousands.

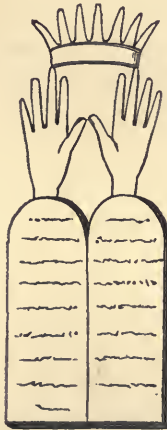
“ How the great Bastille Clock ticks (inaudible) in the Inner Court there, at its ease, hour after hour ; as if nothing special, for it or the world, were passing ! It tolled one when the firing began ; and is now pointing towards *five*, and still the firing slacks not. Far down, in their vaults, the Prisoners hear muffled din as of earthquakes.

“ Woe to thee, De Launay ! Broglie is distant, and his ears heavy : Besenval hears, but can send no help. The Governor surrenders not his Fortress ; declares that he will blow it up, seizes torches to blow it up, and does not blow it. Unhappy old De Launay ! it is the death agony of thy Bastille and Thee ! Jail, Jailing and Jailer, all three, such as they may have been, must finish.

“ For four hours now has the world Bedlam roared : call it the World Chimæra, blowing fire ! The poor Invalides have sunk under their battlements, or rise only with reversed muskets : they have made a white flag of napkins ; go beating the *chamade*, or seeming to beat, for one can hear nothing. The very Swiss at the Portcullis look weary of firing ; disheartened in the fire-deluge : a porthole at the drawbridge is opened, as by one that would speak. See Huissier Maillard, the shifty man ! On his plank, swinging over the abyss of that stone Ditch ; plank resting on parapet, balanced by weight of Patriots—he hovers, perilous : such a Dove towards such an Ark. Deftly, thou shifty Usher : one man already fell ; and lies smashed, far down there, against the masonry ! Usher Maillard falls not : deftly, unerring he walks, with outspread palm. The Swiss holds a paper through his porthole ; the shifty Usher snatches it, and returns. Terms of surrender : Pardon, immunity to all ! Are they accepted ?—‘ *Foi d’officier*’ (On the word of an officer), answers half-pay Hulin, or half-pay Elie, for men do not agree on it, ‘they are !’ Sinks the drawbridge—Usher Maillard

bolting it when down; rushes in the living deluge: the Bastille is fallen! *Victoire! La Bastille est prise!*

"De Launay, 'discovered in grey frock, with poppy-coloured ribbon,' is for killing himself with the sword of his cane. He shall to the Hôtel de Ville; Hulin, Mailard, and others escorting him; Elie marching, foremost, with the 'capitulation paper on his sword's point.' Through roarings and cursings; through hustlings, clutchings, and at last through strokes. Your escort is



Hands *issuant*, erect, out of the "Tables of the Law"—the best supporters of "Monarchy."

hustled aside, felled down; Hulin sinks exhausted on a heap of stones. Miserable De Launay! He shall never enter the Hôtel de Ville: only his bloody hair queue, held up in a bloody hand; that shall enter for a sign. The bleeding trunk lies on the steps there. The head is off through the streets. Ghastly, aloft on a pike. One forest of distracted steel bristles, endless, in front of an Electoral Committee; points itself in horrid radii.

"O evening sun of July, how, at this hour, thy

beams fell slant on reapers amid peaceful woody fields; on old women spinning in cottages; on ships far out in the silent main!" Such was the end of the mighty Bastille—the fortress of the French Monarchy.

A century rolls back like a tide: a mighty procession, sweeping back as in their smoky palls, of "ten tens," like the ghostly metaphorical kings of *Macbeth*—intervene between this present glimpse of the life of the charmed Silver Piece, and the sight which we next dramatically catch of it amidst the tropical beauties, and the fierce heat, and the splendid vegetative shows of the West Indies. To which we now transfer.

Changing the scenes of our story again, and going back, we raise the curtain for a new group, and for new events, in the Tropics.





CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

ISABELLA, THE NUN. TIME—JUNE, 1692.

“GOD smote Savannah-la Mer, and in one night, by earthquake, removed her, with all her towers standing and population sleeping, from the steadfast foundations of the shore to the coral floors of ocean. And God said—‘Pompeii did I bury and conceal from men through seventeen centuries: this city I will bury, but not conceal. She shall be a monument to men of my mysterious anger; set in azure light through generations to come: for I will enshrine her in a crystal dome of my tropic seas.’ This city, therefore, like a mighty galleon with all her apparel mounted, streamers flying, and tackling perfect, seems floating along the noiseless depths of ocean: and oftentimes in glassy calms, through the translucent atmosphere of water that now stretches like an air-woven awning above the silent encampment, mariners from every clime look down into her courts and terraces, count her gates, and number the spires of her churches. She is one ample cemetery, and *has* been for many a year; but in the mighty calms that brood for weeks over tropic latitudes, she fascinates the eye with a *Fata Morgana* revelation, as of human life still subsisting in submarine asylums sacred from the storms that torment our upper air.”

This air is indeed stifling enough to choke one—sulphury and still; as I have known it ere the burst of a tornado. But all is clear and silent.

“Hand me up that bag—that bag full of money,” said George Lestocq, a Buccaneer captain, commanding the Brig, “Daredevil,” as he, in company with some of his crew, was turning-out and rummaging the cabin of an unfortunate ship which had fallen victim to piracy in his hands. We say nothing of what had become of the crew and passengers, who were not to be seen, nor of the



The English Man-of-War in search of the Pirate George.

intended fate of the vessel herself: for the Buccaneers of the West Indies of 1692 were not accustomed to spare either life or limb, or man or woman; nor to remit ships from burning or scuttling or destruction.

The bag was handed-up to Captain George by the obedient seaman who waited on him—a regular marine-wolf with eyes like stars, and covered with hair. The bag was found to contain innumerable Spanish dollars.

And amongst these was a *PIECE* of *MONEY* of the size of the dollars themselves, but very different otherwise, for it looked old as the distant Blue Mountains themselves.

After this piracy, and these probable murders on the profaned West Indian blue seas, the captain of this robber-ship steered his Daredevil for Savannah; where he landed alone, with his pockets full of money. He ordered his Brig to lie off, masked for a time, with anchor up. But with a guard of well-armed seamen, he landed under a rock on the beach; which guard he ordered to wait his coming down from the town; he being evidently bound-up to it on some errand of personal indulgence or of violence; none of his men knew which.

It was June, and the heat was a prodigious unbearable heat. At one end of the town, there towered a large Spanish Convent, whose old grey masonry and spiry turrets abounded in peephole windows and slender metal crosses. Music pealed from its interior. And the sweet voices of the female choir, for it was a nunnery, came, with the smoke of incense, as rolling melody out of the windows.

“I am like the devil in the Garden of Eden,” said Captain George to himself, as with his bare legs and loose blue-and-white striped coat, and with his bright long knife in his hand, like a bandit, he cowered, (listening to the music,) between two buttresses under a projection of the wall; where a huge crimson cloth was let down and bowed out, supported by gilt props, to form an awning for shelter from the intolerable golden glare of this West Indian sun. On this great church cloth was emblazoned the figure of an opalesque gigantic saint, with unshod golden feet, and an embroidered crimson and white face boasting blue eyes and a glory to it. “I am like a thief,” muttered the pirate, “listening to the footsteps of the indwellers who have said their prayers and are going to bed, before he calls in his band of desperadoes and ransacks the house. Strange that the beauty of this pale-faced young fanatical nun should so have fired me—maddened me. I can think, dream, and

speak, even, of little else! Pirate and Nun! Ha, ha! a goodly, gross alliance. Misfortune fall on that day that I, with gaping cursed curiosity—like an idiot as I was, or a hawk intent on new unproven game! curiosity that would have better become a child or a woman, than the redoubted George—a curse on that mad vesper-time that I slouched in the shadows, and heard the service, and caught sight of that one unrivalled angel face! She is immaculate—she sickens with horror at my sight—she rejects with disdain my heap of gold—she shivers at my jewels. The devil can do nought with her in the way of temptation. Though I have heard that some of these sworn nuns are not all prayers and psalmody after all. But she must be mine. And this very night shall she drink of my drear sea-cup. My barque is within signal—my men await me. And now that the service is concluded, and that the nuns pass the *triforium* back again to their cloisters (or to their separate cells), I will essay the bold deed. Caution! Doth any one see me; or can the stones prate?"

No one did, however, see the freebooter. And light and agile he was as a wild cat—for he was slender and small, though strong as a tiger-whelp (this renowned George!) He placed his foot upon one of many rusty torch-irons and lighted-up gaily within the ornamental work or fold, as it might be called, of a double ornamented buttress, catching at the metal spouts, or *gargoyles*, and clutching his way from crocket to boss, and from crossbar to mullion, until—as he would upon a ladder—he had climbed high the convent-wall, and was *in* safe at an upper window—like a fierce small eagle seeking a diamond in a hole in the face of a rock in the valley of Sindbad; full of its spires of crag with the white clouds sailing over them in the turquoise blue.

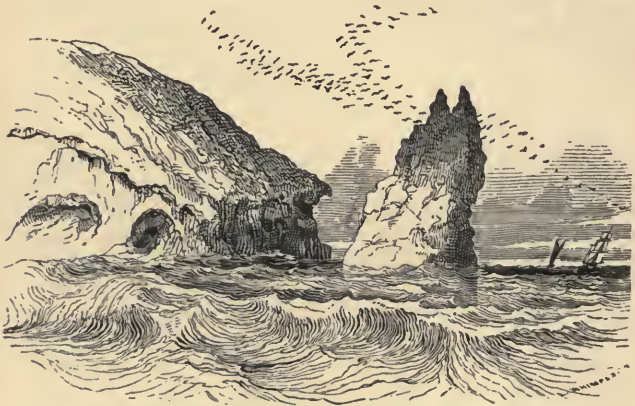
He traced (as if he knew the way) through the windings within the convent. All was still and stifflingly sultry, though dark enough within these upper passages. Twilight reigned in the arched Gothic corridors except at certain apertures with their tracery; which *blazed*, as it were, as you passed them with that blue light, without, of the tropic day. Numbering several

of these windows in his passage past them, but hearing footsteps approach, he cowered for a moment behind a sort of stone pedestal that flanked a large Gothic window—at, indeed, a giddy height, for it overhung the sea; and sharp rocks were deep down below. The tower in which he now was creeping sprang to a great altitude, and its cross almost pierced through the flags of cloud.

A nun in her robes was now seen, in the shadows, to approach. The folds of her dress could but ill conceal her marvellous beauty, though she was pale almost as a marble statue. She was stepping like St. Matthew's angel with sedate tread towards her cell when the pirate sprang out of his concealment and placed himself before her. He threw his knife down on the stones as he sought to seize her hands. She shrank back, shrieked and endeavoured to escape him; but he barred the way.

“Isabella! wonder of a woman!” George exclaimed. “You have driven me mad. I am possessed with a delirium of desire since I first saw you. I love you to idolatry. Nay, do not tremble; do not shriek. You may shudder at my name—recalling the tiger I am—a sea-shark that tracks the ghastly wrecks! But to thee I am but the child of gentleness. Forsake these gloomy walls. List no longer to these mumblings and mumblings! Fold yourself no longer close in those black meaningless muffles! Come with me to Cytherean islands where the sun never yields but to that brighter day, where the moon, lavishing love, is regent. Come with me to fairy caves where the sea-blooms shall spread the couch for thy white limbs, and the corals contend which shall shine royallest—blush wildest, richest. Come where the sand is silver, and where the clouds, themselves, are love's heaven. And if you are sworn to psalms and hymns, and to all this cant, and to service and convent-kneeling; why we will have our great sea-churches, and a full choral peal amidst our stormy sails! We will have our billowy intervals of rhapsody, and our sunbright holy passages of intoxicating love. The sea Syrens shall warble the songs of the Holy Jerusalem to thee, and the waters shall bear the deep

musical burthen—waters rolling in purple more imperially Tyrian—in more religious catholicity of dye—than your brightest sacred service-cloths; which are but of perishable warp and woof. This old nunnish den of mortifying stone, with its idle smokes of incense and its pining fasts, was never made for *thee*! Let crones and the ugly to it! Let the mad and the mumbling to it!—idiots among the men, and ugly crones among the women. Allow to Venus her free air, and the round, swelling, desiring limbs of her daughters—glorious in



"My men await. My ship backs her n a'ntopsail (for thee) within hail. Within the beckon of my finger is a boat."

their beauty. Cast down thy book of convent canticles; and abandon it to the grating and discordant use of sexless, withered, barren and battered, if innocent, old effigies, lifeless as figures of wood and of leather, which are the males of the monasteries; useless, in the Eastern fashion, even to guard the women, and to keep them for the embraces, truly, of such eager spoliators as I. And as for thy quires and services, and holy forms—they are not for thee, thou wonder of a maid! Venus is thy queen, thou beauteous nymph with a cleft rosebud for a tempting mouth, and thy heaving bosom!

Off with these sombre swathes for a nun's habit! Cast them, and thy psalms, to chanting hags among the women. For thou wert born for the day. Thou wert sworn a servant of Aphrodite—ruling with a more absolute sceptre than chiselled crosier—charming men of flesh and blood like a goddess; not beseeching saints or shadows like a mope. Come with me then at this most favourable moment. My men await—my ship backs her topsail (for thee) within hail—within the beckon of my finger is a boat. I have a casket of priceless jewels to hang about thy marble limbs. I will chain thee in precious chains of gold. I have money wherewith to array thee more superbly than a queen. I can put the lives of men in thy hands. And I can give thee power to place thy foot upon crowds of the people of such superstitious holds as this; with its paralytic priests, its jingling gimcracks, and its mad moping women. Listen to me! Seek not to fly, for it is hopeless. I shall never, I will never let thee go. But I fetter thee with kisses, with a passionately loving gripe. And see! See, Isabella! The blood-stained monster George is at thy feet. He who is dogged by the sabres of a thousand revengeful brothers, husbands, and lovers, gone wild in the thirst of vengeance for his imputed crimes—I am he whose name muttered here in this so-called holy place would cause all your bells to tingle to denounce him—flinging iron curses proclaiming him upon the Tropic air, and of themselves cracking—angel-struck—in the intensity of their horror at him! He whose foot burns in fancy through your thick stones as foot of the fiend—He whose barbarities could disrupt and undo, in fright at them, this whole hollow grand old building, and heap its ruins, solid like a pyramid, over his at last judgment-overtaken body—found out by the lightnings of the Eternal—HE prays on his knees for your love.”

“Man, away—tempter, away! Wretch—madman! Would you lure me by the catalogue of your hideous sins?” exclaimed Isabella, though she was almost sinking with fright as she struggled to disengage herself from the embraces of the Buccancer. “Free me from thy

knowledge; which darkens me as veritably the Shadow of the Evil One! And oh! my last hope! blessed Heaven assist me! Save me out of this instant, this terrible peril! For I am sinking in the net of this frightful boaster, this devil starred in his own iniquities. Even on the holily inscribed stones of Heaven's own sacred house, doth he kneel to ME, thy vowed priestess! soliciting me—me, A NUN, to perdition.”

“I yield you not,” cried George, as he set his lips close till the blood came, and he seized from his girdle the bag of silver which incommoded him in his deter-



“I am sinking in the net of this frightful boaster—this Devil.”

mined attempts to clasp the Nun over his shoulders and to bear her off. The canvas-bag broke in his hard gripe, and a heap of silver coins flew rattling out like a rain. Among the other silver-pieces there was ONE that illuminated for an instant, with an intolerable glow, the Gothic gallery. And it glanced sharp, and flew out of the Triforium window. As it swept past the dwarf pillars of the decorated arcade of which the Triforium-opening was composed, column and trefoil-heads were torn out as if by a Hand—a prodigious HAND that grasped them.

The sky darkened. The air turned thick blue—opaque—dun purple, as if in an eclipse. The stonework where the Pirate and the Nun now struggled—the one endeavouring to escape and the other to seize—became black.

There was a trembling under their feet, as if the entire solid stone structure, in the high tower of which they contended, was shaking apart—as if it were ejecting its metal-clamps in a startled shower of iron, and tumbling into ruin of itself. A strange, heavy, lumbering sound—preternatural and awful to a degree—rolled beneath the sacred edifice, as if of the mighty “waggón” of the underground Dis waiting for the ravished. There were sharp reiterated shrieks in the air. The steeples toppled, and there was a clatter and a clang, and a storm as it seemed of bells, as they were swayed bodily in the motion of the belfries. Gushes of white lightning hissed almost as it might be called, (for there *was* noise), in at the ranged, traceried, terrible windows now, of the holy house. And the batteries of the thunder kept up incessant discharges, while the whole city seemed to heave and to roll away, as upon the sea itself in billows dark and dreadful. Earthquake was struggling up to day in the centre of the whole island. The sea went and came like water in a cup. Ships, houses, trees, mighty stones, and all the confused parts of the late landscape (when still in its fright of expectation) were tossed and driven, as if to the sky, like sticks and straws. Such was the mighty earthquake of June, 1692, in this disrupted island.

At the first shake underneath of the great convent, the Pirate George—well knowing the fearful meaning of that motion—abandoned his grasp of the Nun. He staggered back, and lifted by the flags of the gallery which literally rose to his feet like the deck of his own ship—as if vengefully rejecting him back again into his own sea—he tumbled headlong through the open window, grasping feebly at the broken ornaments of it. And the last that was seen of him was the keen flash of his knife (which he had again picked up)—bright for an instant upon the thick darkness without. The

Buccaneer-captain flung past the opening and dropped headlong, like a stone, into that well of billows. The sea boiled up almost as it seemed for the express purpose of swallowing him alive, and meeting him.

But there was One to escape from the horrors of that scene—from the torn walls, earthquake-battered, of her holy convent home. The crosses which spired and protested as they seemed to the lightnings were her rescue; were her protection. She fell indeed. But the enormous foliated metal crosses which sprang from every pinnacle and the minor groups of them of smaller size of polished steel which were set according to a quaint Catholic fashion, upon every “coigne of vantage,” when the sacred building fell cracking like an egg-shell wholly in its hollow—these closed over in a defensive heap and struck in points starlike like cherub-swords above her; forming a sacred fence, and a sort of “angel castle”—from which she—found fainted—was finally extracted (as from out a symbol-guarded crossed and recrossed tomb) when the great sea had gone down and when earthquake and horror had ceased. And this almost miraculously saved one was Isabella the Nun. Rescued even out of earthquake!





CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

MR. BOOTY AND THE SHIP'S CREW. TIME—1687.

NO circumstance connected with supernatural appearances has occasioned more altercation and controversy than the undermentioned in this story. The narrative certainly has an air of overstrained credulity ; nevertheless, the affair is curious, and the coin-

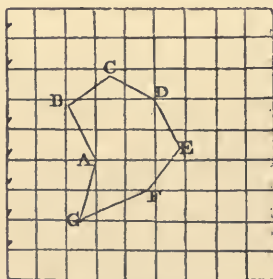


Chart produced in Court belonging to Captain Barnaby.

idence very remarkable, especially as it was a *salvo* for Captain Barnaby. The former part of this narrative is transcribed from Captain Spinks's journal, or log-book, and the latter from the King's Bench Records for the time being. For both are extant and copied from faithfully.

“ Tuesday, May the 12th. This day the wind S.S.W.,

and a little before four in the afternoon, we anchored in Manser road, where lay Captains Bristo, Brian, and Barnaby; all of them bound to Lucera to load. Wednesday, May the 13th, we weighed anchor, and in the afternoon I went on board of Captain Barnaby, and about two o'clock we sailed all of us for the island of Lucera, wind W.S.W. and better weather. Thursday, the 14th, about two o'clock, we saw the island, and all came to an anchor in twelve-fathom water, the wind W.S.W., and on the 15th day of May we had an observation of Mr. Booty in the following manner: Captains Bristo, Brian, and Barnaby, went on shore shooting colues (curlews) on Stromboli: when we had done we called our men together, and about fourteen minutes after three in the afternoon, to our great surprise, we saw two men run by us with amazing swiftness: Captain Barnaby said, 'Lord bless me, the foremost man looks like my next-door neighbour, old Booty,' but said he did not know the other that was behind. Booty was dressed in grey clothes, and the one behind in black; we saw them run into the burning mountain in the midst of the flames, on which we heard a terrible noise too horrible to be described: Captain Barnaby then desired us to look at our watches, pen the time down in our pocket-books, and enter it in our journals, which we accordingly did.

"When we were laden, we all sailed for England, and arrived at Gravesend on the 6th October, 1687. Mrs. Barnaby and Mrs. Brian came to congratulate our safe arrival, and after some discourse, Captain Barnaby's wife said, 'My dear, I have got some news to tell you; old Booty is dead.' He swore an oath, and said we all saw him run into 'hell.' Some time afterwards, Mrs. Barnaby met with a lady of her acquaintance in London, and told her what her husband had seen concerning Mr. Booty; it came to Mrs. Booty's ears; she arrested Captain Barnaby in £1,000 action. He gave bail, and it came to trial at the Court of King's Bench, where Mr. Booty's clothes were brought into court. The sexton of the parish, and the people that were with him when he died, swore to the time when he died, and we swore to

our journals, and they agreed within two minutes: twelve of our men swore that the buttons of his coat were covered with the same grey cloth as his coat, and it appeared to be so: the jury asked Mr. Spinks if he knew Mr. Booty in his lifetime: he said he never saw him till he saw him run by him into the burning mountain. The judge then said, 'Lord grant that I may never see the sight that you have seen: one, two, or three may be mistaken, but twenty or thirty cannot.' So the widow lost the cause.

"N.B. It is now in the records at Westminster.

"James the Second, 1687,
Herbert, Chief Justice,
Wythens, }
Holloway, } Justices."
And Wright, }

The above is vouched as a veritable record so far as evidence at this distance of time and the testimony in a Court of Justice of the persons concerned can sustain it. Besides there is an impressive air of truth about the whole narration and precision in the detail of the little circumstances, notwithstanding their absurd, (seemingly), and incomprehensible character. With that contradiction we have nothing to do. We leave it to our readers to assent or dissent.

It was in the year following these singular events in his voyage and this remarkable trial concerning them in the Court of King's Bench, that Captain Spinks, who was fitting up his ship as a Guineaman for an adventurous voyage to the coast of Africa, and who was in want of a mate, received an application in the River where his ship lay with anchor down as usual at that time, from a young man of sunburnt complexion and of a somewhat foreign look, but who had a very good mien, and who was a lively talker.

"I wish to ship with you," said the new comer. "I am a sailor—by which I mean, I hope, a good one and not a bad one; or poor one, at all events."

"I am glad enough to have a knowledge of you,"

returned Captain Spinks. "But I never saw you before in all my life; and though it is true I have a berth vacant aboard my smart ship, this 'Blue Dolphin,' yet I must take caution and be careful—and you must excuse me thereupon—with whom I fill my berth."

"Nothing more surely, nothing more to the point. I wish to force myself upon nobody. But look here, sir. Will you, in kindness, glance at these papers?"

The young man produced foreign-looking documents with huge seals bearing the Portuguese royal arms. And he placed them in Captain Spinks's hand. This was done with confidence, and with a good-humoured air of surety and safety.

"No, no," said Captain Spinks, shaking his head as he glanced at the writing and found that it was foreign. "I understand no language but my own." And then he turned to a fat black sailor who was cook aboard the vessel, and who happened to be standing idle near. Captain Spinks ordered him, by the name of Old Ivory, to call up Sam Voightlandts, and to tell him to bring his spectacles.

Now Sam Voightlandts soon made his appearance at his captain's summons—"Read this," said Captain Spinks. "You know all the languages of the whole round world, and can make this soon out."

Sam was a huge North-German, with a prodigious sea-hat on his head; and with brown leather breeches covering his nether man, abounding in dirty sea-green ribbons. His hair was grey, long, and uncombed. And being old, he *looked out* of his pair of spectacles; for that is the term for his glance.

"Dis burports to be," said Sam, with the slow gravity and disdainful deliberation befitting his present confidential duty; "dis would seem to be," he repeated, "a constitution (or batent) creating or appointing the within-named Senhor Meinheer, or Mister, Antonio Essen Barreiros, 'captain-at-sea of His Most Faithful Majesty, the King of Portingalle, and commodore of six-and-thirty cannons'—in consideration of the great services as discoverer amidst the Islands of the Farther India of his renowned ancestor Joseph Pinhal La Guarda De

Barreiros*——” But he was interrupted by his commander.

“Belay, Sam, belay,” quoth Captain Spinks. “That is as long as an admiral’s blue thong. Young man, your name? That must suffice for me.”

“Pedro, otherwise Peter; Barreiros, otherwise Barry.”

“I see, friend. This Antonio Essen and so on,” replied Captain Spinks, “stood (or stands), in the genealogical ship-bill or family register, as paternal relation to thee; and that is why you bring his certificate.”

“He was my grandfather,” replied the very handsome young man, again taking off his broad-brimmed hat, from which his long dark hair fell out freely over his face. He made a bow, during which his silver buckles shone in his shoes—for he wore these dandy additions, and he was otherwise well-dressed spite of his sea-fashions: his silver buckles also, we say, glittered from under his wide sleeves amidst fine linen ruffles. For all three speakers were standing on deck in the slant sunbeams of a bright golden August afternoon. All the old-fashioned sway-ing ships were, as far as progressive motion was concerned, at rest round our “three men of the sea.” And save an occasional lively run of “clicks” from the manned windlass in one or two instances, all was bright

* See, later in the volume, the extraordinary adventures of the grandfather of this *real* Peter Barry; the young mate who shipped with the above-named Captain Spinks in his trading-vessel, the “Blue Dolphin.” These will be found narrated in that section of “One of the Thirty” which is entitled the “Portuguese Discovery Ship,” and in “Snake Island.”

If search be made in the Custom-House Books for the Port of London for the year 1688, in the alphabetical arrangement of names of “Ships” and of “Captains,” “Clearing out of the River,” with their “manifests” and “bills of lading” certified by the proper authorities, there will be found—“Spinks, Master—August 7th:”—and “Blue Dolphin,”—entered outwards for the Coast of Guinea: Stephen Hill Spinks, Master;—carrying letter-of-marque.”

The Author is aware that some of his statements (however true), are so singular as to be difficult of belief. But in every case he confidently refers to his authorities.

gold sun, red roofs, silver-plate of water run into scores or curls, now and then, by the longitudinal or arched swirl of an eddy, and multitudinous sticks of spars, hanging together like the loose-looking Dutch shipping in a sea-piece of Vandervelde's; and spotted here and there with a red ensign or with dots of blocks.

Intermingled in the bright yellow sunshine spread over the River-view were green trees and glimpses of country, queer ships—probably of war—with high gilt sterns, much image-work and cedar-coloured broadsides studded with red-mouthed guns, and the Deptford Dockyard with latticed windows (like a “military farmhouse”) and tiled roofs.

“You shall be my helper and mate, young man. I like your honest looks,” said Captain Spinks to Peter Barry after a few turns with him on the quarterdeck of his ship. “Go below now, and overhaul your berth. You will find the globous silver watch with the red ribbon still hanging up in it of Griffith-ap-Davis, my late mate—a Welshman to the backbone and every inch a sailor except for his shoes; for he *would* wear high-heeled shoes even on the yards, with great red Flemish roses in them. But Griffith-ap-Davis we threw overboard—don't be alarmed! (poor fellow he only died)—in the Tropic one burning afternoon in our homeward voyage. Being slain with a fever. So you shall have his berth and keep time by his own watch that stopped; if you please. That's all. Now go below, my friend, for I want some meditation alone; and I meditate upon ‘my anchor.’”

“Thank you,” said the new young mate. “I will go below, sir. And if I could find in my poor predecessor Griffith's locker—provided the commons were not too stale—a cube of white Dutch cheese and half-a-dozen rusks with a carraway in them the refreshment would be neither unacceptable, nor I flatter myself unworthily or thanklessly bestowed: if appetite were any correct evidence of it.”

“Dive, my son, dive,” cried the captain, winking slyly and good-naturedly. “Thou shalt be well cared-for if I

send thee something from my own old sea-fowl roost to fatten thee. Go below and take a thimbleful of the *schnaps* and an observation, with one eye out of the port, at the latitude of the exciseman coming there; who with the gilt king's arms in the head of his galley pays us the honour of a hail now and then, as he goes by."





CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

THE BARBARY ROVER. TIME—1688.

PETER BARRY sailed duly with Captain Spinks in the good ship "Blue Dolphin." They had a prosperous voyage and fair weather until they arrived at Lisbon. Here they put in, being charged with a mail and certain important packets of despatches from the English Government to the British Minister resident at the Court of Portugal; for this was before the time of the Post-Office. They remained wind-bound at Lisbon for the space of ten days. And Peter Barry, who had not been in the capital of Portugal since his youth—although it was his native city—was induced to seek out some of his kinsfolk in the town and several of the ancient friends and allies of his family whom he found with some trouble, and moreover whom he had pleasure soon in bringing to the acquaintance of his captain; greatly for the purpose probably of proving to the latter the truth of his representations as to his (Barreiros or Barry's) respectable—nay, to his superior position in the world, and his character.

Evening after evening were spent ashore amidst the lights and amusements of Lisbon. Nor was the mate or his good captain permitted to escape wholly from the seduction and dissipation of one of the then most debauched capitals of Europe. Mingled with his good qualities unfortunately was developed in Peter Barry a disposition for gambling and a little other vice. Aye, and even in company with his captain he lost sums—considerable sums for him—and got into squabbles and difficulties innumerable in the streets and shops.

Lisbon, which has a spacious and safe harbour, and a population—now—of over 260,000 persons, is situated near the mouth of the Tagus, on seven hills, and contains many grand and stately edifices, among which one of the principal is the patriarchal church. The treasures of sacred relics, gold, silver, precious stones, and costly furniture of this venerable structure, are immense. The royal palace of Ajuda is one of the finest in Europe. The Square, called *Praca do Comercio*, is 615 feet long, and 550 broad; in the centre is a noble equestrian statue of bronze, of Joseph the First.

Being a city where you meet nothing but priests and continual ecclesiastical processions—most magnificent in their furnishing-forth, and parading the streets almost day and night with “bell, book, and candle”—Lisbon has at every hour something striking to show and to arouse-with. It is all dazzle to strangers—except in the bye-streets where you can scarcely see.

Peter Barry and his good-natured easy captain spent their time mostly in the streets. They almost dwelt under the arcades or lingered at the windows or in the marble vestibules and long galleries of the great mansions. Nor were the houses where public play was the rule of the day—and the night—forgotten. In fact these houses became the constant haunt of Peter Barry. He had grown very greedy of money and envious of rich things as the result of the moral mischief imbibed from his frequent visits to, and losses at, the hateful gambling-table. Every third house—including noble-men’s palaces—was then a shop of chances of this kind. Besides Peter had formed seductive female acquaintances of no great repute. And from one cause or other he stood in manifest danger;—if his necessitated stay in this dissolute capital was to be of much longer continuance. He was being absolutely spoiled—nay, ruined. Captain Spinks at last saw all this clearly; and was eager to convey the young man away.

A singular adventure chanced some short time now. It happened that one day when an unusually superb procession—all priests, white robes, banners, swinging censers, aromatic smokes, and glitter—was passing

through the *Praco do Comercio* (and when litanies were at the loudest); that owing to the thronging of the people about it there occurred a momentary scuffle. This, arising from the desire to see, might have been quieted. But anger was accidentally provoked, blows were exchanged, and the disturbance rose into general malicious commotion. The thirsty, sweltering, gaping, passionate crowd went swaying, pressing, and squeezing against the seeming silver snake, or chain of light, to which, as by a bold figure, we may liken the glittering, grand church-procession as it wound its way in and out through the dark mass. Respect for the sacred banners even could not awe the people, or prevent them from crowding in upon the line of the *cortége*.

Amidst this distraction, clatter and noise of tongues, and in the now general hurly-burly prevailing over the square, the priests and choristers got separated and intermingled with the mob. And their white gowns were torn. Even the huge gilt crucifixes were seen over the heads of the people to toss and stagger, and some to tumble like the masts of storm-driven ships. Also some crowns of life-sized saints fell in the scuffle. In an eddy of the crowd several priests, too, sank in the dust. It was almost laughable—though one could scarcely control a feeling of fright—to see a Bishop tumble (caught in his two or three crimson and purple skirts) with his breast blazing with gems and muffled (over the shoulders) in robes illustrated with a whole gold biography of the saints. Several stones—precious, as their red, green, and diamond-like glories told—flew flashing from his vesture. And amongst them several silver medallions broke out bodily from a matchless chain which hung round his neck. Like a kite Peter Barry, who was standing near and fighting really for his foothold in the squeeze and press, saw the silver medals careering as they rolled about and seemed to invite a snatch. And, pouncing upon ONE that lured his hawk's eye with its beauty and extraordinary glitter, he thrust it eagerly into his bosom with the quickness of its own light.

In time peace was restored—the noises subsided—

respect and reverence again returned to the mob—and the procession gathered itself together again and passed on. And by night—when the bright stars came out which over the white palaces of Lisbon shone like lucid globes suspended in the universal clear dome of royallest purple—all was forgotten. There were then only guitars and lazy dances again;—the heat that you encountered like a thing at the corners of the streets and the bright lights in the sky and the murmur of tongues and songs from the open windows, and intermittent flashes from the bazaars when people passed.

We have said that all was forgotten of the tumult in the streets. There was one thing, however, that remained of it to remember. It was the singular SILVER PIECE. Peter smuggled it away with a strange fascination—with a grim delight which seemed to come of the very balefullest smiles of Plutus. He burned with thoughts of it—with love of it like a cherub from (as it were) a whole heaven of fellow silver-plate. He went aboard with it and hid it away in his berth as a fascinating prize which the world could not match.

The following morning saw the snowy sails spread of the “Blue Dolphin.” And away she sped with anchors up over the bow, and the fairest of winds, towards the Barbary coast.

But mischief relentlessly dogged the doomed possessor of that accursed Coin. And fatal influences, so long as it was in his hands, were mustering against the unhappy and unconscious young man; who, in his unblest greed, had accepted not only it, but the malediction that always went with it; unknowing that it was a Thing of the Devil.

It happened shortly afterwards, one stifling forenoon when running down the dusk coast of the swarthy Moors, and when the sea, in the intense heat, seemed almost half of an unnatural dun colour changing into specks and flashes of bright gold, and half of a sickly ultramarine breaking into hissing green with a steely froth, that Captain Spinks through his huge sea-telescope made out a creeping, low-lying, snake-like craft with lateen sails and a long black, dangerous-

looking hull gliding along the horizon. She hung in a cloud of haze when she was first descried. She showed no colours, and she spread her wide jagged spiky wings like a roused dragon, green from the fell embraces of the witch-like sea, his mother.

“An ugly, wizard craft as ever swam God’s good sea!” said Captain Spinks. “And we’ve not wind enough to stretch out and to escape from under her grip, mayhap. But we’ll try our chance. And if needs must, we’ll fight like the devil, my boys! How say you, Peter, my young David? You are not ambitious, I suppose, of an iron collar with a loose ball to it about your neck; as holds the fashion with these Moorish sea-thieves? You can try a fall with this ocean Goliath, my young champion of Lisbon?”

Peter’s answer was a flash of the eye and a curl of the lip, in the same instant that he drew his long sharp sword. He flung down the sheath and stamped hard upon it, flourishing his sword. And his eyes lightened.

“That’s it,” cried Captain Spinks, rubbing his hands, charmed at this display of fierce resolution. “Out all sail! And if we can’t scrape clear of him, we’ll blow this Algerine sea-shark, pirate and devil—for a very true copper-coloured devil I make him out—into the very reddest concave corner of his own burning pandemonium.”

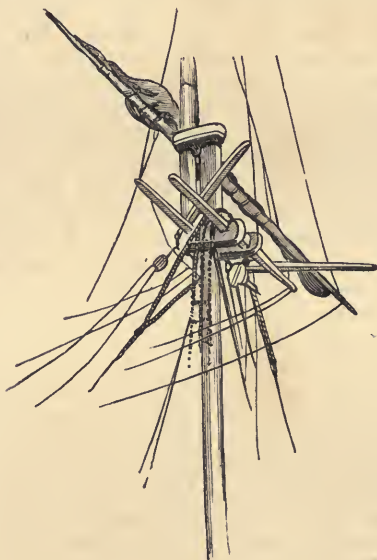
In the meantime there hung the pirate out at sea.

The hours of the day crept on slowly and gloomily. Afternoon came in due time. The fiery sunset of the African seas succeeded. A huge globe of crimson, the sun was fast sinking. There was no sound but the lazy wash of the green waves about the sides of the ship. The rover had crept near, spite of all the cloud of sails which the unhappy “Blue Dolphin” showed on this universal azure of the sea prospect, lighted as it seemed by * “Afrif” or African fires.

The Algerine pirate now grew sharp and slender, nearer and nearer. Her stem and stern were peaked up like the shining new moon, and her lateen sails of split cloth in a short while slid down in (as it may be

* The “Afrifs” were Nubian Genii—very powerful and mischievous.

roughly, but truly called)—a cloth-muffle of demolition to her thickly-manned decks. She reduced her sail, preparing for her coming cannonade. Trumpets (nothing less singular) sounded to quarters amidst her crew above and below, and presently a sharp gun went off. In the middle of the white cloud of which gun-discharge—round as a disc—the ship of the pirates hung



Stripping top-hammer for action.

spider-like (with its fine netted cordage), but picturesque; the warlike and fierce centre of a globed radius of spiteful smoke that sat on the water like a ball.

“Look at the devils!” shouted Captain Spinks, stamping on the deck in his rage. He pointed to the numberless round black heads of the Barbary rovers, who in their white kirtles, and with the snowy swathes about their heads, were bustling about, separating and

then intermingling again in the quick glitter of steel. The mob of black men in their white gowns and cowls looked like a Convent of Carmelites as suddenly struck devils. The whole show was grim and wild, but highly picturelike—terrible, we must indeed say, and enough to frighten civilised people.

“Here they come. Rally, men, to your guns. Have at them!” called Peter Barry almost in a frenzy of excitement, with his face glowing like that of a martyr or a hero. He had stripped his coat off, and bared his arms to the elbows as if for fight the most desperate, and resistance the fiercest. For the young man knew—and every man on board knew—that if the Barbary rovers got the better of them, but little mercy was to be expected. Aye, and but little life.

The most dreadful battle commenced, now, between the English trade-ship and her wasp-like flying-out assailant. This insect from the African dun sands. In the middle of the smoke, and crashing all over the roar and clatter of the conflict, the gilt beak—hung with chains—of the Algerine rover was now frightfully displayed like a monster Dragon high over the quarter of Captain Spinks’s poor fractured vessel. And the dragon of which the prow was composed was torn and splintered, spearing through several planks of the “Blue Dolphin’s” bulwarks. Now inboard, over the deck of the merchantman, the two great eyes of the dragon seemed to glare down like a horrid fable. And the black pirates, with a song, or rather with a wild howl, scimitar in hand, took a sort of a savage morisco dance adown the slippery deck; and then they retired with violent action, until they had fairly gathered in horrible crowd, in their last return, about their own bows. They now began to throw fireworks in plenty into the ship which hissed and sputtered; and some of the desperadoes got-up into the rigging of the “Blue Dolphin,” and were slashing and cutting at the cords to prevent the ship’s escape.

Peter Barry, with his Spanish blade in his hand, rushed, with the boldest of the merchantman’s crew at his back, to beat the Africans fiercely again into their own ship. But there was no withstanding them. They

swarmed with their red fez caps and their striped turbans, their flying white gowns and their embroidered slippers, in over the bulwarks and through the chains, clambering and clutching through the portholes and straddling in by the anchors, clutching at the ropes, scrambling and crawling. They hung like apes, clawed like vultures—held on with the tenacity of cats, gibbered like monkeys, and smote with their bloody glaives like madmen.

The long moresco pistols and handguns were telling with dreadful effect all over the decks of the trader. Guns—we mean cannon—went off loudly, all in the midst of the fight. Blood was running—gunpowder was flashing. The young mate, who was fighting like St. George, cut his way into the thickest of the mob of the Moors. He made his way through them by a lane which he cut, where the scimitars were brandishing like scythes or sickles in corn. He escaped unhurt as by a miracle—and he alighted fairly on their decks. With a roar and a shriek the Moors fell back scared from before him, as if they had seen a vision of the helmeted St. Michael flashing rays of destruction all round and spear in hand. Peter Barry was followed by few or none of his own people. All were deterred by the desperate peril of pursuing the Moors into their own now gunpowder-blackened ship. The sudden fears of the English were justified for the immolation of the poor young mate. For this Algerine snake of a ship suddenly swung thundering off with a huge gap in her side dropping sawdust like powdery blood where the shaven timbers showed the wounds, and with spruce tackle and white sails hacked and hewn almost to threads and rags. But she dipped away; and up and down she went on the tumbling green water—heaving off her head at every move, and rapidly contracting into herself, till she showed, in the perspective middle distance, as the ruins of a ship, with all the glory beaten out of her. But the valiant Peter Barry was hard and fast;—left behind aboard her. There was an universal scream in the “Blue Dolphin” when the crew missed him from among them.

"Accursed emblem, thou hast done thy work!" Peter almost shrieked in fear as he tore the SILVER PIECE, which he had picked-up from amongst the spoils of the Bishop's vesture in the *Praca do Comercio* in Lisbon, from the ribbon by which he had hung it foolishly round his neck. "I am the only one now to read thy mystic meaning—fool that I was at the first to mistake thee. Go—for thy mischief is complete! And thou hast, at least, bought one for thy Dusk Prince, through these his devil ministers upon the magic sea. Coin—that wert minted in the fires of Hades—to thy Melter; though with me, (the Bought), with thee!"

The heaving, tossing sea rolled, in a short while, the two ships almost close to each other again. Both the Barbary rover and the merchant-ship touched and struck each other for an instant. Hands were instinctively stretched out to eagerly seize Peter Barry. But the pirate-ship and Captain Spinks's ship were torn, in the swirl and swell of the blue waves, finally hopelessly asunder. The merchantman, in this final escape, was in a few fearful minutes at some considerable distance, urged by sweeps wildly away.

But now an awful tragedy was enacted on board the black murderous African. The vengeful Moors, raging that their prey had escaped their clutch in this dashing last successful move-off of the "Blue Dolphin," rushed upon the unfortunate mate, now captive in their hands, with their captain, a gigantic Nubian with a prodigious pair of gold-earrings jingling in his ears, at their head. A hundred scimitars were bared and flashed thirsty and clean in the sun; and a horrid clash of chains soon told the intended doom of the unlucky prisoner. The vessel of the Moors was at this moment rolling top-heavily and dipping up and down guns and all in the sea. A mast fell smashing now with all that remained of its tackle and furniture. And apparently maddened at the crash, and furious at the audacious, almost the successful attack made upon them on their own deck by Peter, as well as excited beyond all bounds by the shrieks and torture of their writhing wounded, the

mass of chains were hurled in a storm of iron to the bulwark, as precursory to the contemplated slaughter of their Christian victim. Now surrounded by his ferocious assailants, whose intention it seemed to be to hew him in pieces momentarily, on the planks as he stood, a first gash on the naked arm—which brought the quick-answering blood in a red ring—preluded but too surely the last fatal work. We will spare the reader—and ourselves—the further stage of this horrible murderous scene. Combating like a lion in a ring of steel, but weaker and weaker from loss of blood as Barry grew at every turn and disabled by repeated cuts, the black monsters completed their work by hurling at last the body of the poor young sailor—far now beyond more than the faintest indication of life in the clutching at rope or even at swords which cut his hands—into the sunlit waters. There was a circle of blood—the size of a small shield gules—and that was all till the new water rolled over.

So perished the poor young mate of the “Blue Dolphin.” So fell poor Peter Barry a sacrifice to the unappeasable malignity of the SILVER COIN.

And on silver wings it flew on to still further mischief, and to ruin and terror.

The summers wax and wane. Fifty years elapse before the Genius which worketh to men’s understanding in the neuter-individuality of the SILVER PIECE becomes recognisable as an intelligible thing again.





CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

CAT'S-CRADLE. TIME—1632.

IN our childhood we remember an absurd game which used to amuse some of our idle quarters of an hour with, perchance, a single playmate. It was performed with the fingers of both hands; upon which thread, usually white, was extended. After being wound over the palm of either hand, the threads were lifted with the opposite forefinger, and contrariwise raised apart; upon a principle that constituted the skein as a diagonal, mathematical thread-skeleton, or an open figure forming a puzzle removable to and fro, from either uplifted hand of the players. This game was called "*Cat's-cradle.*" The name, in its German rendering supplied the denomination, (perhaps from the difficulty of getting-in, as equal to none but a cat) to a wild and gloomy castle, or rather a heap of towers, perched upon some sharp, high rocks amongst the *Erzgebirge*, or Mountains of Ore, between Saxony and Bohemia. The time of this phase of the history of the PIECE of SILVER is 1632, the year of the Battle of Lutzen, distinguished by the fall of Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, the head of the German Protestants.

The lord of this romantic, repellent-looking castle was a man of uncommon breadth of body, with a huge head and a fierce face; whose unamiable expression was not mitigated by a black beard which rolled down to his bosom, nor by his grey long hair streaked with sable. He lived the life of a hermit, shutting himself up with his books, his philosophic apparatus and his

chemical machines; which the few peasants who lived scattered about the foot of his mountain, and the woodmen who made long exploring excursions into the neighbouring forests, with their huge axes like those of headsmen over their shoulders, declared were contrivances, traps and gins, to catch wandering beautiful spirits, and



South-west view—from below the rocks—of the Castle called "Cat's-Cradle."

stray, winged, wondrous creatures out of the devil's world of the invisible. Be this as it may, the Count Tubal Daduk—for this was the title of the humpbacked nobleman—was set down by all the trembling people in the neighbourhood as a man literally in league with the Dark

One. The devil, indeed, was said to pay him occasional complimentary visits in a thunderstorm; and to be entertained in his ruinous great hall, not by the comfortable gleam of Christian candles, but in the baleful splendour of false phosphorus-flames, and in the flashes of lightning of growling mountain tempests,



Giant-Rock—called "Alpen-Hootz," or "White Face"—in the neighbourhood of the Castle.

that came when the Devil came, and shook all the country.

It happened late one evening that an old traveller arrived at this picturesque village of few houses, which *crouched*—for that is the true word for its appearance—at the foot of the Count Daduk's mountain. The new-

comer was a very reverend-looking man, who seemed like a pilgrim except for the battered corselet on his breast, and for the colours of the sash bound around his waist, which proclaimed him a fugitive from the great field of Lutzen, and a *Protestant*. A sort of cloth was wrapped about his head; and he wore a broad-brimmed hat wherein was a broken feather.

The sunset was thundrous and glaring—red and ominous. There were great black clouds in the sky. The air was stiflingly hot. And as the traveller looked up at the castle—from its great height amongst the mountains, seemingly just over his head;—certainly it looked, of all places, the most unpleasant and the least encouraging to approach. It literally *frowned* from its brown shelves of rock. It was lurid-looking throughout its entire length;—sanguine occasionally in the copper-coloured, sulphury tinges of the wild—nay, the savage landscape. The castle had all the appearance of a hold of robbers, with its grim grey towers and multitudinous rusty grates. Or it seemed as if it might be the castellated retiring place or *hazum-gazum* or *gazebo* of some princely sorcerer, to whom earthly crowns were as naught; the thunders alone being his festal music, and sulphur-feasts his banquet.

"And must I make-up that wild path—old, wounded, wearied as I am? And will none of you shelter for one night a pilgrim-soldier flying from battle, where he has fought valiantly for the truth?" This was asked by the traveller of two or three wild-looking people who had gathered to examine him; and who scowled and frowned.

"For what truth hast thou fought?" said one. And all gathered around. "Thou art a heretic. Thy colours proclaim thee so. Thou art a vile Swede; or, at least, a Protestant. Thou art one of the children of that devil of a Gustavus Adolphus. We have naught of thee. Go up, if thou darest, and ask lodging and entertainment of the great magic Count up yonder. As a man of learning, which thou sayest thou art—though a soldier—thou wilt be welcome to him if thou canst show him the way to the Grand Secret. For avarice is his passion, gold is his thirst. And if you can teach

him to light *that* fire in which he might melt up all the rusty bars and dungeon-grates of his castle into the most precious metal, gold, why thou wilt have as roaring a welcome from him as his spare habits will admit, or as *fiends* may provide. For he keeps no household—save devils.”

“And he is suspected to be Mulciber or Moloch,” said a grey-headed sire. “But beware of thy tongue, neighbour Franz, for it may get thee into trouble. The Count has gibbets.”

“He has a daughter,” added a woman, after some pause, to the soldier; “and, wonderful to say, ugly as the Count Daduk is, she is reported to be a miracle of beauty. And she sits, up yonder in her father’s Castle of Terror, only as a sort of angel in a dragon’s den—and calm like one.”

“I must on, then—ignorant and brutish people. I have that which shall procure me welcome from worse men than this mere ill-natured and churlish nobleman—for such I read him through your superstitious exaggerations. And on my way down the mountain, to-morrow, I will remember your unkindness—for my *remembrance*, merely, may be perhaps revenge. And I cannot avenge otherwise your ill-treatment of me. Part from around me then, ye cowardly and inhospitable tribe. When I come down, you shall have (perhaps) again a word of me.”

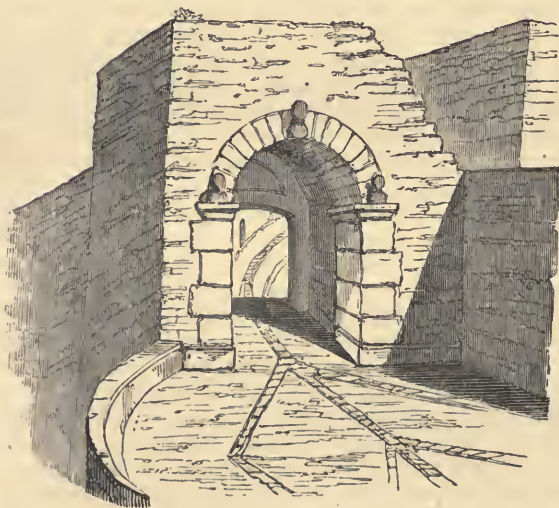
“If you ever, indeed, *do* come down again,” said Abel Tiak; a sinister member of this community of half gipsies, half peasants.

“There are few fowls that wing down again from that gibbet-stone when they have once perched upon it,” called out to him one of the villagers, named Yokel, after the traveller had gone on, and pointing exultingly to the grim castle on the rocks, which had now a cloud over it. And grim it looked indeed.

“I am protected by more beneficent powers than those you invoke.” And the old pilgrim-soldier went on his way up the hill, with a staff in his hand which assisted his steps over the rough ground.

He found the path so rugged, and the way on ac-

count of the precipices was so dangerous, that he was a long time before he had mastered much distance. Dark-green woods of pines, mingled with some gigantic spreading trees, were dispersed about him. The deep gold light gleamed on the many grey faces of the rock, and gilded the uprights of several rough wooden defensible bridges which he crossed; where the water flashed and sparkled redly and angrily, as if hurrying into a fire-sparkling lake of Tartarus. Overhead—now



Overhead—now seen, now lost, as the cliff-battlements and the wood alternately opened—showed the savage towers of the Count's castle.

seen, now lost, as the cliff-battlements and the wood alternately opened—showed the savage towers of the Count's castle. There was perfect silence except for the tinkling of a stream when the traveller had left the larger water. But now and then a strange hoarse grumble of thunder, like a huge wild beast in the distant woods, for a moment aroused, and then shaking itself off to sleep again, was heard dubiously rising

from the sombre face of the country; which was just as Salvator Rosa might have imagined it.

And, by-and-by, with much toil and pains, and when it had grown nearly dark, the old man, after crossing two mountain drawbridges, with wooden supports and iron chains, reached the huge yawning ugly gateway of this forbidding hold. Monstrous old worm-eaten gates, as if hewn out of the planks of some giant *catafalque*, and covered all over with bosses and clumps of red iron, interposed to forbid further passage. Maximilian (for that was the old soldier's name) looked about him for some time in trouble and perplexity as to the manner in which he might make his desire for admittance known. He felt a creeping sort of fear, too, which terribly diminished his confidence; it inspired even dread as to his present personal safety. And directing his gaze downward almost with a feeling of fright that he was where he was, his eyes travelled wistfully over an expanse of lovely country with thunderclouds glooming the greater part of it; and he saw the silver crescent of the new moon at the edge of one of the largest dark clouds. But he gathered more courage; and now going back into the shadows of the gateway under an enormous old Gothic portcullis which was all mouldered and dropping in heaps of rust, he caught sight of a metal horn, so large that it might have hung at the gate of the castle of the giant in "Jack the Giant Killer." This he seized to blow, and to summon some one to answer him. He was, with all that he had seen and suffered, so faint, hungry, and we may now fairly say *frightened* (for all he saw and more that he dreaded was sufficient to alarm), that at first the horn refused to give any murmur for his attempt to sound it. In fact, so heavy was it and so tired he felt, that it almost dropped like a half-ton of iron out of his hands. But at last, after several trials, there came a dreadful noise out of the horn, almost as if a voice of itself. The blast of the horn burst, as it were, preternaturally on the silence and startled one awfully; thundering round and round in the hollow archway, and even seeming to make the ground tremble under the feet, and causing the

chains to clash which were hung in festoons high within the gate. Looking up he saw three dead heads on either side of the dark archway.

“May the gracious powers be good to me!” ejaculated the old soldier with a shudder. “Those are surely human heads; and this frowning gateway is indeed the introduction to a hold of horrors. Horrors of which those heads are doubtless the unspeaking but the best witnesses.”

If it had been possible Maximilian would even then have quietly withdrawn in the shadows, slipped unperceived down the mountain in the dark side of the battlements which coiled in descent down the steep slopes into the shaggy and gloomy woods, and left the dreadful horn to answer itself. But slipping away in this safe and unperceived manner was now impossible; and at this moment, trembling with terror at the invisible, Maximilian awaited what the adventure should present; and what strange and perhaps giant shapes should come in answer to his blowing of the horn. A horn more tremendous perhaps than that of the Paladin Orlando himself.

There was no doubt that Maximilian’s uncertainty in regard to the strange, uncomfortable sights which might present themselves from this alarming gateway of this very terrible castle, was most trying. Even the silence seemed unusually deep; as if expectant of some change which might have exciting effect upon a listener. Of real indubitable objects—formidable though they might be—of flesh and blood, Maximilian, as a soldier, had no fear; although he felt now feeble. But in the delay, and in the mystery of what might be preparing, or what might come, lay the discomposure. So the old soldier looked with penetrating, wary, excited eyes right and left of him. And he peered close over his shoulder very often, as if he thought an Ugly Thing might steal-up behind and startle him unprepared. The surprises, if any, that were preparing, would however take their own time; and all the impatience in the world would not compel disclosure too soon.

Maximilian was kept waiting a very long time

(during which the growls of distant thunder were all that had meaning), before any response was made to his summons of the horn. But by-and-by a lancet



"Food and shelter!—seek it of the bears, then. For you have no entertainment here."

window, deep within the arch, was thrown open, and the huge African head of a black janitor, with crisped hair and great gold earrings in his ears, was thrust out. Maximilian started.

“What want you here?” was the demand of the warder.

“A word with your lord. I am a traveller. I seek food and shelter,” Maximilian humbly replied.

“Seek it of the bears then. For you have no entertainment here. Unless you wish a banquet of broken bones.”

“My good friend, I have that which will soften your inhospitality. Show this token to your lord.” And Maximilian threw up to the ugly querist the *PIECE* of *SILVER* which has now reappeared so often; and upon which the old soldier seemed to rely.

The black caught it, and went away. On his return there was a hideous clash of bars and bolts; and through many dark passages and under an arcade of festoons of chains as it were Maximilian was conducted into the Count Tubal Daduk’s portentous presence.

He found him in a Gothic hall, which (so dim was the external light) was illuminated by very numerous fiery cressets. A damsel standing at his side with submissive looks but of a beauty that instantly struck intense admiration, was doubtless the Count’s daughter; of her Maximilian had heard in the village below this Wizard-Mountain. She seemed in inexpressible trouble—nay, almost beside herself with fear and grief.

Maximilian, spite of his hardihood, trembled before the dreadful looks of this misshapen and ill-favoured nobleman or wizard.

“You send me a strange token, man,” said the Count, bending on the traveller a look which pierced him through and through. “I must question elsewhere about thy mysterious money; for—in my secret knowledge—I distrust it much. You shall to rest with my hinds. And for your night’s lodging you shall give me that Coin.”

“Never!” exclaimed the soldier. “I will pay you in good current money, but with that token I part not.”

“Say you so?” cried the Count, rising and stamping with his foot. “Off with his corselet—which bears the cross I see—and away with him into a dungeon.

Chains shall be his banquet. Darkness shall be the joy of his chamber; and in it he shall rest."

"Abandoned wretch! What should be thy policy with me?" cried Maximilian, as he struggled with two hooded ruffians who had seized him at the beckon of the Count.

"Save me, gallant soldier! Oh save me!" the Count's daughter suddenly cried, throwing herself at Maximilian's feet, and clasping his knees, totally regardless of the rage of her father. "Save me from *him!*"

The traveller and the Count's daughter Palenka (for that was her strange name) were instantly separated. And the lord of the castle paused a moment as he turned his shoulder contemptuously to the victims before he sat down, to pronounce the following—

"To safe keeping with both. I betake myself to my means—towards it—to ascertain the character of this silver token. If it be as I suspect, the THING is mine. I give him three days to yield it; at the evening of each of which produce him to me. And if before the third day he rendereth it up, he shall go forth. But if not—by the Gates of Tartarus, but I will close him in a barrel of spikes and send him rolling headlong down my magic mountain. Away! My oath is sworn. By Baal I swear it!"

The night passed. It was a night of thunder. The morrow came. It was a morn of fiery clouds and of half-darkness; during which the wheels of the day seemed to have rolled impossibly back, and to have brought Eve again and its stars, instead of the natural morning.

The Count with—to him from his suspicions of its power—the *precious* SILVER PIECE OF MONEY, betook himself to his secret chamber, locked and relocked; bolted and rebolted the doors of the Gothic passages which led to it, and shut himself up. He clothed himself in the robes befitting his forbidden studies—placed on his head a diadem significant of his rank in the Rosicrucian hierarchy, and plunged for tools and appliances amidst

his stores of magic furniture, and into his heap of cabalistic machines. His furnaces were lighted at his order by unseen hands; and he set sternly to work. Dark shadows descended around the grim tower in which this titled Archimage sat toiling; groaning in his agonies to wrest glorious new gifts out of the reluctant world of the invisible—if not with tears, at least with blood.

Bowls of hot metal, curtains which concealed the symbols of unutterable mysteries, forceful rods which compelled the presence of the most powerful supernatural shapes, tomes of wizard lore; and the means of spells which, liberated, might have shaken half a city or split in the sudden his own mad mountain: such means as these were now alone about the grim Count Daduk. He took the SILVER PIECE in his hand; and preparatory to casting it into the furnace in which a mass of hissing or singing liquid metal lay fiercely blazing, he struck it with an axe, the blade of which was marked all over with unintelligible but tremendous characters. There was a hideous crash as the two halves of the SILVER PIECE flew asunder even as if with a shriek, and the roof of the very, fiercely illuminated place in which he laboured was rent wide-apart as if by a Gigantic Hand. All the instruments of the wizard-art about the Count Daduk glowed for a moment with intolerable lustre; and there was a groan like thunder, which ran through the vaults and under the foundations of the whole castle; nay, under the enormous rock on which it stood. Still, though pale as ashes, prostrate on his marbles and amidst the ruin of his magic, and half dead, the Count persevered; believing that in the two halves of that magic PIECE of MONEY he yet possessed the grand Magisterium which was to convert all the pools of metal which were gathered in vases, in globes and into gigantic receptacles of various kinds about him, at once into a monster mass of gold.

Grappling, therefore, the two sundered halves of that PIECE of SILVER—so tremendous in its effects—the Count flung them into his boiling furnace. But they sprang out again *like thundershots*, blinding the eyes of the wizard. And they flew out from amidst the torn

stones, and from the fissure of the chamber like fiercest hell's rockets. At that moment an explosion which snatched (as it were) the breath away of, even, those at the foot of the mountain, shook it from base to top. The tower in which that unutterably Presumptuous Trial had been made was torn wide open longitudinally, from summit to foundations; and an avalanche of stones like a storm fell into the chasm from either side; which were instantly ejected again as a prodigious fountain of sparks shoots from out a volcano in one of its most tremendous fits of eruption.

And such was the end—amid fire and smoke, and the lights of the damned—of the impious Count Daduk. His daughter survived. And in memory of that great day (in which they had been both saved as if by a miracle) she bestowed her hand upon the brave old Lutheran soldier who had saved her life. For her father had doomed her as a human sacrifice to his gods.

Blackened ruins and withered grass alone now tell the site of Count Daduk's castle.

And a long interval of time occurs before we again take up the story of the SILVER PIECE.

In that part of Germany to which we refer as indicating the site of Count Daduk's castle, there will yet be found traces of the tradition which assigns its awful demolition to the Rosicrucian reputed feat alluded to in our story. It is a wild romantic part of the country, where the mountains are really romantic mountains; quite answerable to our ideas of mountains in supernatural old Gothic stories. Germany supplies innumerable appropriate scenes for such fanciful narratives. And even in this day, inquiries in the district that contains the ruins of this weird ancient castle will be responded-to in the evident local belief that it was doomed as impious.





CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

THE PORTUGUESE DISCOVERY SHIP. TIME—1588.

THE rapidity of the Portuguese conquests in Asia was wonderful. Calicut saw Gama land in 1498.

Between that remarkable year and 1516 (less than twenty twelvemonths) his intrepid fellow-countrymen spread themselves from the states of the Zamorin to China; they visited as conquerors, and often described correctly, some of the maritime kingdoms of Malabar, the Coromandel Coast, the Gulf of Bengal, and the Peninsula of Malacca. They established themselves at Ceylon, and at the Ankedives and Maldives, and made Java, Sumatra, Borneo, and most of the Moluccas, as well as a part of New Guinea: traversed the Chinese seas, discovered the Island of Lew-Chew, and were driven by storms as far as the shores of Japan.

Such were the results of that enterprising spirit, that contempt of danger, that ardent love of glory, which inspired the descendants of the men who were formed in the school of Prince Henry, and led by the Gammas, the Albuquerque, the Perez, the Sequeiras, the Castros, the Silveiras, the Andradas, the Almeidas, and so many other captains, who bore the honour of the Portuguese name to that quarter where the immense eastern ocean seems to have fractured into a thousand islands the vast mass of Asia.

“Goa of the thousand spires!” called aloud the captain of the “Four Evangelists;” a high-sterned, sharp-prowed Portuguese trader, shining with gold; as, under her white reduced sail, she toppled from side to side in

making her way from the spot where she was descried a mile or two to seaward of a bold blue headland, blazing, almost, in the light of an Indian afternoon. For above and below seemed almost like sky in its light.

The light breeze flagged as the goodly ship, swinging on the long clear swells, swept towards the exterior horn of the harbour and lazily showed her painted sides to the inner faces of the quaint, chocolate-coloured, brick-and-stone-edged fort. As the "Four Evangelists" (they were displayed, sculptured and gilt, at full length, on the three-storied stern) drew into the harbour, a long dart of flame from a queer brass gun and the sudden hoisting of the Portuguese royal flag challenged the new-comer and demanded answer. And the ship gave the answer in three, first; and then in *one* large globe of smoke, and in five lumbering reports which seemed to set the bells of the innumerable convents jangling. But they happened to strike up at that moment for vespers. And bells and tolling seemed, soon, to become as a new life to the old city—quiet and dead as it had before appeared. The wind fell; the sails would no longer fill; the huge crown and gilt royal cipher to the maintopsail, were rippled all over as the sail dropped loose in its dragging folds, ruining into demolition the heraldic quarters. The ship had no longer headway—or, rather, instead of headway, she had sternway:—and therefore the anchor was let go with a splash like a great fish. The gilt head flashed its arrowy eyes almost in presumption, as it were, into the face of the enormous shining disc of the golden sun. And, with her cables down and her white sails furled, the day's labour of the goodly barque was now done.

Then arose a cry of joy, and, we grieve to say it, profane songs were sung; whilst the holy prayerful sounds of the church-bells were still in the mariners' ears. A boat on each quarter of the ship—the ship was almost Chinese-looking in its old fashions—came down, dip and splash, into the water. Instead of prayer and kneeling, as became true Catholics about to land during those sacred portions of time appropriated to

the Blessed Virgin's Vesper Service, and instead of response to those holy litanies, the rough mariners, dressed in their gaudiest, with their holiday trinkets and with flagons out of which to drink, and swollen pouches out of which to spend, came trooping trampling ashore. As if a mob of ocean Bacchanals, fresh from the orgies of some purple sea-encompassed isle, where the corals blush ruddy as the very sanguine sunsets in which the wild revelry was enacted and the wild songs sung—the crew of the painted and gilt barque jostled into the boats with a too eager haste, and with a too boldly expressed desire of enjoyment to please their burly, bitter, jealous captain. His brows lowered, and his eyes twinkled maliciously.

"Devils of men!" he shouted. "Hasty fools! Back! Into the ship, again, with the one-half of ye! Or I'll know if hemp can hang or fetters fret."

"Let *me* go, captain," begged Pedro saucily.

"Pity for *me*, captain. I want to see these churches," expostulated José, clearing his eyes of his hair.

"I long to say my prayers before some altar," laughed Manuel.

"I have a vow of an expostulating barrel of gunpowder to blow some silver saint clean out of his niche," yelled Hippocampo, mocking.

"And I've been as a lark in thy hot cage of a ship—a very devil who has sweated nearly all the fire out of him in thy penal hell—*senor* captain, these sixteen moons; and I think I've earned my foothold of earth, now, or the Black Fowler shall have blame of it!" This was ejaculated by a gigantic seaman, abounding in hair and named Cophaget:—Cophaget was an Anak.

"Move not, Pedro. Stir not, José," returned the captain. "My lark, Tellus Cophaget, who speaketh so wittily and so well, he shall to shore with me for this bout. Into the boat, seahorse Cophaget. And thou shalt find a willing wench and a rivulet of liquor, or my name's not Joseph Pinhal De Barreiros. I know how to encourage the modest."

The two boats put off, and rowed to shore. The

captain, Joseph Pinhal De Barreiros, sat in the stern-sheets of one boat—a regular hard-visaged Portuguese sea-master of the oldest day; with a steel breastplate over his sturdy chest, and a great ropy sash round his waist from which stuck the silver-covered butts of two horse-pistols: which might, without exaggeration, from their marine use have been denominated *sea-horse* pistols.

The beams of the slant sun fell golden behind on the golden slabby water-path of this train of slipshod mariners—half man-of-war's men, half pirates, as the crew seemed. They made their way towards a beautiful, though a small church; which, seated amidst picturesque rocks, and hidden nearly in the thickest Indian foliage, looked as if it greeted them warmly and whitely and tinkled with its many bells especially for them, from the top of a hill. It was situated about two miles from the circle of the city—semi-fortified this latter was—and the “*santa-casa*” stood almost alone, or with a few native houses only in its close vicinity, as if for shelter from man, if not from storms. The sky above was blue as sunlighted *turquoise*.

The bells ceased—the heavenly bells ceased. An image of the Holy Virgin, with a superb crown of silver, shook in her richly-decorated tabernacle and seemed to frown down upon that riotous, half-drunken sea-mob.

There was alarm, apparently, within the church. For there were frightened steps heard pattering up turrets; and the responses of a choir within, and the songs of a service which was celebrating, abounded in quavers, doubtless to an infinitely greater extent than was intended in the music.

“What date is that yonder over the door of this old rat-hole of hymn-singers?” asked the captain, spying at it, in mockery, with his great sea-telescope with the glasses jingling like castanets.

“Fifteen hundred and fifteen,” returned Cophaget. “Dedicated and so forth. Founded and so forth. My sea-education helps me no farther, Captain Joseph. I was born in a powder-barrel, and went out into the world in the flash. And so I had scant time for either

letters or lantern to light me. I said all in a report, and made an end of it in a ball."

"Good, Tellus. This was the year of Gama. Down with the tablet! Do these crows of priests make answer? If not, apply me fire to their straw, and let us see what they have within this fine nest of theirs! Knock them up! They are asleep or on their knees, yet, or hear us not with their humming songs," said the captain, yawning.

At this, there was a great battery on the double-leaved doors, which set the iron bosses and steel clamps, the hinges and flourished braces clattering like a man in armour. A loose-armed knight galloping over a drawbridge.

A pale thin face, with a priest's cowl about it, was thrust out of a turret window. The man to whom the face belonged grasped a cross, which he waved; but he dropped it in his fright out of the window. And at this there was a loud laugh: one or two stones were also thrown, in sport, at the priest.

"In the name of Our Blessed Lady, to whom this building is dedicate," said the priest, "what want ye, rough men of the sea? If it be wine, we have none."

"Wine! And you have none? Ay, and banquet we want," called Captain De Barreiros. "Open your doors peaceably, or we may make way within these old courts, if you hesitate or resist (for ourselves), my good friend psalm-singer."

There was a hurried consultation carried on within. Then came a pause. Suddenly a great bell tolled violently, as if screaming for assistance; and sundry signals of pressure imposed, or of "church distress":—flags, in fact, were run up with all sorts of saints upon them (some head-downward) from a turret of observation with a spiry cross upon the top of it.

"In with the door! Break open the doors, ye seawolves! In with all and lap your fill!" cried Captain Joseph. "I have the utmost respect for Holy Mother Church, and would not harm one of these white lambs of her fold for a thousand moidores. But we are

hungry, and we are thirsty. And we want cheer to help us into the harbour, now that the wind leaves us nothing to do."

"Hear the captain! Hear the *padrone!* He wants but a book at his belt to be as good as a preacher or a priest," cried a mate of the "Four Evangelists," named Christobal Polenka. He spat, as he spoke, on the sand, and combed his black, twiny locks with his ringed fingers out handsomely.

At a new hammering the leaves of the great church-door were cautiously unclosed from within, and in a moment the beautiful convent mosaics were clanking with the sea boots, or the bossed shoes, of twenty of the man-of-war's men, or ruffians, whichever they might be called.

Captain Joseph, the mate Christobal, Cophaget and the others stared with great astonished, rude, ridiculous eyes at the rich convent furniture. After some slight superstitious hesitation they strode in, walked about with a swagger, trod up the steps of the altar, examined and mauled the candles curiously, sat on the embroidered kneeling-stools, took up and tilted, at first half in shame but half in daring, and then wholly in audacity, the sacred vessels. And they soiled with wet sea-sand and dripping shells, from their feet and clothes, the gorgeous footcloths and carpets, and washed their hands in the holy water.

"Silence that horrid clank!" called Captain Joseph, as the turret bell sent forth, every now and then, its convulsive and frightfully-agitated peal. "Run the toller through, if he persist! Or we shall have all the pious howling here from the city, at this rough inlook, at church-plate, of an old sea-dragon:—and no harm done!"

Two of his men ran instantly to execute the captain's order. There was one long frantic pull at the bell, and then silence. There was a sound, at the same moment, as of a heavy muffled something being thrown out of window. And then again silence; murder-silence.

"Villain!—dog of a heathen!—accursed sea-robber! Forbear, or I will cleave thee! Help, in Oúr Lady's name! Sacrilege! Sacrilege!" These and sundry other

terrific exclamations were shouted by a priest, who, pale as death, had caught Tellus Cophaget in the daring act of grappling a jewelled rosary, and plunging his huge fist, containing it, into his bosom.

“Shut the doors! Kill the thieves! Let them perish in their devil’s-work!” cried a novice, full of ardour; who, prompt as his word, catching glimpse of the act of spoliation, had raised the metal crosier which happened to be in his hand, and struck the robber fairly on the side of the head with it. And down Tellus came. There was veritably a cross of blood on the side of his face, distinct and clear.

Instantly there was confusion. The sailors drew their long, sharp, Spanish blades, pointed their pistols, and attacked the priests, who, muffled in their robes and exposed to odds, could make but a feeble resistance, if any, to their lawless assailants. Some blood was spilt, and a most unequal combat was waged. On the side of the sailors, one man was badly hurt, being struck down by an image which was hurled from its place in a lofty top-arcade of the church, by a resolute, strong monk. The crew of villains did not abandon their sport, their ridicule and spoliation, until they had seized all the rich things that were readily portable. It was a grapple of glittering things.

“Come hither, my lark of the sea, who sang so well!” said the brutal captain, Barreiros, calling Tellus Cophaget to him, and fondling him, with a tigerlike sort of affection, much as he would a child; when Tellus’s heavy foot was planted close on the altar steps from which Captain Joseph spoke. “Didst ever see thing like that? Ebony so rich, or silver so massy and so richly inwrought? By the book of St. Mark, or by my great deep-sea anchor (which is an oath more to the purpose), but it is a dainty rood!”

Tellus shaded his eyes, much as he would when staring at an object in the sun soliciting attention at sea; and which he suspected as a ship.

“Never did I see so fine a thing, captain. ’Tis a crucifix, is’t not?” And the huge seaman involuntarily bowed before it till his monstrous hoops of earrings

met and jingled under his chin. Wonderful instinct of the movements of the SPIRIT in the heart.

“Note that SILVER MEDAL in the midst of the cross,” said Captain Dè Barreiros, “with the ring of green, snake-glowing *smaragds* around it. The whole thing is worth a kingdom! But the silver piece, to which I havè taken a violent and most uncontrollable liking, must content me just now. Make a spade, Cophaget my child, of thy sword, and dig me out this thing of metal. I will drill a hole in it with a red-hot wire, and verily I will hang it as a talisman about this neck of mine—this old sea-throat hoarse with ocean-bawling.”

Cophaget did as he was told. But perhaps his hurry to obey his captain, his state of half-intoxication, or, that which is more likely, the terror he secretly felt at the sacrilege he was committing—he being, in his way, a devout Catholic—all this caused Cophaget to strike and scoop with his sword so smartly, and at the same time so agitatedly, that the SILVER PIECE of MONEY or MEDAL flew out apparently before the time of natural abstraction. And it tumbled with an ominous hissing clink upon the marble pavement. As it fell, a sharp split was heard—a *rend* as of torn stone. A slab disrupted; slit from end to end as if struck with a mighty invisible axe. And the two halves of the stone were thrown up in reverse, and tossed flat on their backs like the doors of a trap, or the boards of an open book.

“Santa Maria!” ejaculated Captain Joseph, with a grin on his face, but crossing himself, half in fright, although he knitted his brows instantly after as if in defiance, “but that is a strange sight. Methought a fiend, with a brand of hell-fire, was going to dart up and smite me out of that hole!”

However, the grim Captain stooped and picked up the ancient PIECE of MONEY and carried it away in his hairy bosom.

What came of this hideous violation of holy things, and what resulted from this unparalleled outrage upon the Church; also the fearful penalty which happened to and befel not only Captain Pinhal de Barreiros but his godless crew—including his ship, devoted to evil, though

bearing so sacred a name—all this shall be told (for warning) in the chapter succeeding. Heaven preserve in us our reverence! And may good thoughts save us from evil influence and from the malific intelligences which walk the earth seeking out and making victim of those irreligiously audacious, and the inveterately profane! May we grow cautious in our oaths as in the way we walk! Swearing not at all, or only vowing for good; if we must swear anything.

Now, reader, attend awhile patiently, and you shall be made aware of the deserved judgments which fell on this abandoned captain and upon his desperate crew; whom even the silence of the seas could not tame, or impress into awe; or the blessed, beautiful clouds over the sea reduce into the reverential usual wonder. For these men, in their miscalled holy ship (perhaps sent forth with the benison of the Church when she was launched), had wandered over the wide ocean, and had seen no object save God's sea and sky out of the windows of the little craft, with its tiny white sails; as into which toy, in the comparison, the great white clouds over reduced it. Sea and sky spread-out to the horizon from around the lonely ship; from which ship you could almost mistake the sea for the sky, and *vice versâ*; as you sought, in the sky, almost *waves*, looking up into it until your head nearly grew confused; and you seemed to make out also amid the wide stretches, and plains, and roads of water, *clouds* lesser or larger, crowded in multitude, or single, in the sea.

Thus below was above, and above was below.

Sky seeming sea;—sea seeming sky.





"*Anguigena—effloresca*," or "Snake-Flower!"—produced in the Island.

SNAKE ISLAND. TIME—1588.

IN a short time Captain Barreiros and his crew of sinners sailed. Anchors were tripped. And speedily the "Four Evangelists" with her glittering guns sped like a cloud into the blue of the far ocean going away into the distant seas upon her business.



An ancient inhabitant of the Island in the distant seas.

For a time the wind blew very fair. Under a pyramid of sail the gilt, streamer-bedecked barque—that "Four Evangelists" whose unfit name as the ship of a

crew of such hardened recusants (and for a captain so presumptuous and bold ; nay, unimaginably ingenious in his wickedness), was the abiding witness against all evil—the stout ship, we say, grandly stemmed long and successfully the “purple wastes” of the Indian Ocean. She doubled Cape Comorin. She steered inside of the then almost unknown great island of Ceylon ; and in latitude 10° when at about three-hundred leagues to



The Land—China—from which the Captain of the ‘Four Evangelists’ last came to the Island of his Destiny.

the eastward of this the ancient Taprobana the mariners swept round their sails and penetrated in the south-eastern direction ; sailing to the Equator. The voyage was effected with song and dance—riotous song, half-drunken dance when the watches were safe set as they thought, and when the fierce captain abandoned his men to their nightly bad carousal. So passed the time for a certain period. But now—

“The storm-blast came, and he
Was tyrannous and strong.”

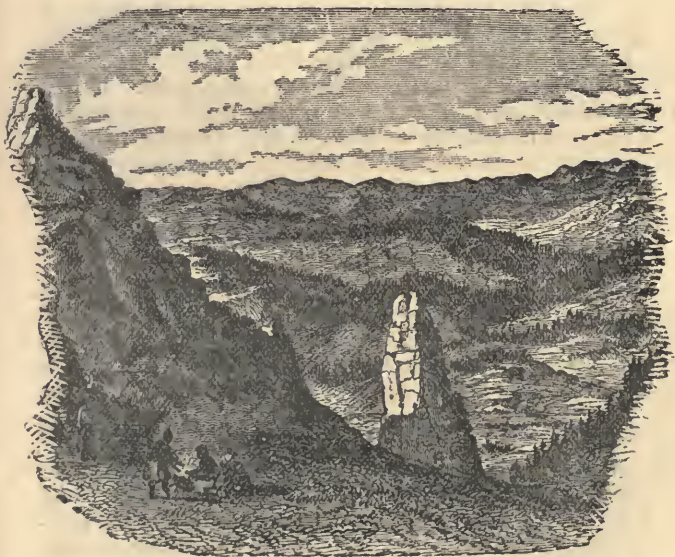
And a wild hurricane coming on, forced the straining and water-battered "Four Evangelists" into seas of which even the most experienced mariner knew nothing. Then after five weeks' driving and after they had attained to certain islands—found of intolerable heat when the tempest and the fierce rains following it abated—they discovered themselves to be in a wild latitude; quite beyond their own, or even any man's knowledge. The situation of the ship under these circumstances became alarming. The "Four Evangelists" was now in fact scorching directly under the Equator quite in a new world, deep buried amidst the inexpressibly wonderful and the then almost seeming supernatural chain of islands (with their superabundant overgrowth and magic skies) lying to the west of Sumatra.

Here the winds utterly failed. The storm-driven mariners almost fainted day by day with the intolerable heat. The seams of the ship opened and the pitch and tar melted out in streams. With loud cracks day and night the ship, as it were, burned up. The calms continued. Until partial fires took place in the forest all was silent. Life, air, blood, everything was stagnant—burning. And it was only by constant rowing—such feeble rowing, and that alone by night and in early morning, for the heat was too intolerable to admit of any exertion by day—it was only by continual towing and the aid of currents, we say, that Captain Joseph contrived to work his vessel between two rocky and lofty islands where he took anchor. These islands lay paired (with a few small others grouped about) in a bay of surpassing beauty even for the Indian seas. But magnificent as all the sights about the bay were, the splendour was toned with so many aspects of terror that no human eye could look upon the wonders without quailing in the fear of what next was to be shown.

In this bay of shaggy terrors, then—glorious as it was—anchors were at last dropped and cables veered-out. There were avenues of splinters of tooth-like rock which served for weird posts for the ropes.

"I shall lie here to gather breath for a month to

come,” said Captain Joseph, looking round with glittering eyes in a daring but ghastly sympathy with the terrors of this fiery place. “And now my friend Christobal, for these open mouths of timbers of ours; which—thirsty as they are—suck-in by far too much of this equatorial green water for our lives to be secure. All hands—even your captain’s—shall assist in tossing the ship over. And we will string her—failing these



Scene in the interior of “Snake Island;” with the pointed, isolated rock afterwards called by the sailors—“Beelzebub’s Pin,” or “Milestone.”

thunder-splints of stones for bulks—to the huge trunks of the trees; which with their scaly green bodies like serpents, amidst this monstrous undergrowth, spire as if with palm-like spreading canopies into a heaven of itself on fire. Burning by day it seemeth, and smouldering by night. ’Tis a hell. ’Tis a devil’s-hole into

which we have run. And we will make the most of its masters."

"Your will is law, captain," was the reply of the mate Christobal. "We will set upon this search for leaks. Though we may be stricken feverous to deadly strait in this den of poisons. And we may die, captain."

And the gaps in the ship were found and stopped in the heat.

The place where the ship lay was almost covered-in like a bower with the prodigious palms and the giant-trees that everywhere ramified like a fortification around the ship; or they were as beleaguering walls. Rather it looked as a thick, great net in which the painted ship was caught like a little gilt fly. Twining, twisting, massed; presenting thick walls of foliage starred with innumerable glaring flowers lustrous and of all colours; bound with chains of creepers and with tough ropes of great plants (hairy and almost animate, like polypi, as they seemed in their horrid convolution): prickly, bulbous, blistering, set with spikes trellised over with a strong shining network in which monstrous birds of gaudy plumage and with long tails, and in which brown shaggy apes were caught and strangled—the vegetation of this whole too-violently fecund region was that indeed of the glorious Equator, bursting with fierce richness. The myriad ferns were trees—radiated, arrowy. Groves of *cacti* drew up to thunder-splintered ashen trunks like classic terminals or like tall columns. A dank, noisome, coagulate steamy atmosphere (glittering even into pearly sparks in its malific activity where it thickened)—shaggy glens, Cyclop-looking, cavernous recesses, long-embowered walks dark even at noonday in their weight of foliage and with the massed woods abounding in lights (of nights) as phosphoric gases intensified and slimy wood and vegetable rottenness wrought and wreaked-up together to snaky baleful illumination; stars exaggerated in their size and strengthened into light as to little suns—a *sun* by day which shot fierce and fast its—in this place—intolerable universal arrows, and which made wood so hot that you

could scarcely touch it, and metal so painful to look on even that the eyes wept at it;—the globous moon, angry, wizard-like, red as shining down through the ragged spiky clefts of the wood-covered tower-like hills and through pestilential mists green at sunrise, purple and glowing bright with opalescent phosphorus at midnight:—all these horrors (even for the daring) were now round the alarmed, the despairing, the superstitious crew.

“Thy talisman has brought mischief, *padrone*. Truly didst thou say that we had run as into hell,” said the mate Christobal. “We shall die. We shall die, captain. Methinks that COIN glares like a devil about thy neck. And see if the very chain hath not burnt thy ruff through—aye, even burnt black into thy skin—like a ring of fire to thy neck, captain.”

“Out on ye! Would ye drive me mad?” shouted the captain almost in fright, bold as he was, as he tore the unlucky SILVER PIECE from before his scorched bosom; on which indeed it now shone with an unearthly and triumphant light—almost enveloping the man himself sometimes in its sinister red splendour like the conscious magnetic atmosphere of a devil.

It was now evening. The sun was low; crimson like the fire-illumined shield of a Fallen Angel shown lustroously; fiercely red amidst the architectural piles of the baleful and glowing “Martin’s” Pandemonium. There was a murmur in the distant woods. Day had been hitherto still in them, as the sea is still in the fierce glare of the sun in his exaltation. Night had been a season of whispering, of noises—nay, sometimes as of a roar with the thick prolific life—insect-life and other life—of this fierce, insupportable, equatorial nook of vegetable transcendent glories. We have said that there were six or eight ropes made fast out of the hawse-holes and drawn through the red-painted ports and even out of the cabin-lights of one side of the now duskily gleaming—in the green daylight-reflections—Portuguese ship; for even the gilt of the ship had changed green—glowing.

“What is that?” asked the mate Christobal

anxiously, as one of the ropes seemed to twist and quiver as if with a small black knot upon it. There was as a sable "seizing," as a sailor would call it, caught on the rope—the spot was like a thing of life—it was locomotive.

"Look intently," said Christobal to Cophaget, who was next to him. "What may the strange thing be that playeth with the rope like a tiny dancer on a string yonder?"

"I know not," answered Cophaget, peering with all his might and in fright into the twilight. "Unless—Snakes! Snakes!" he yelled in a moment. "Look out, there! Four of them are making inboard here as fast as they can crawl! By all the secrets of this horrible hole snakes are creeping shipwards-in on one of the ropes!"

"I see them wriggling hitherwards as on scaling-ladders over our rope-bridge one by one like a crowd of soldiers bent to storm a castle. Pedro—Orfila—Diaz—cast the ropes loose! Cast them loose in the name of God; or we be dead men! By Saint Jago, but I see more—more yet—more!"

And Cophaget spoke truth. For the four snakes, each following the other with deliberate, undulating pertinacity, were now, with alternate hissing rise and fall, close in on the deck of the ship. And more were following along the same slippery bridge. The crew were aghast. They rushed together—seized with horrible panic. The other cables grew in a few minutes blacker and thicker with new inroad. Like tense sloping strings the ropes were as fatal ladders to this new and altogether frightful *serpent-storm* as of a man's citadel. One after the other (their green basilisk eyes now glowing in number like stars) over each of the ropes—serving them as elfin-bridges—did the snakes—ministers of a dread retribution—come. At first they slid in twos and threes—then they crawled by dozens. At first they climbed slowly and stealthily the long, looser ropes till they curled over the bulwarks and came twisting and twining in, dropping like strings, or like the scattered, lead-

ing soldiers of a column of assault. And then they rushed on their prey, in venomous and incalculable bulk.

The spectacle was beyond name and word horrible! The snaky squadrons seemed to grow and grow; serpent following serpent in thousands, in small innumerable trail over those so suddenly improvised and fragile bridges. They moved forward with horrible success, impetuosity and relentlessness as if sorcery and some frightful fiat of punishment sent them. A tremendous horrid hiss, as the chorus, ran along the ropes to and fro as still more and more of the reptiles came crowding. They sought the ports—they trailed along the deck—they stung the heels of the masts—they coiled up the rigging like new ropes to it—they pursued with vengeful hiss the shrieking mariners as they sought safety—they dropped by twenties swinging like weights into the laps of the sails—they crept into the mouths of the cannon as into their own proper holes—they blackened the gilt-effigies of the saints at the head and stern of the ship; they wreathed in and out of the carvings like new snakes to the Laocöon.

The whole ship seemed alive with snakes. They boarded the cabins through the windows—they throttled the listless wheel as with new ropes in the affrighted helmsman's hands who instinctively rushed to and grasped it. They rattled now from stem to stern over the floors of the ship, and seemed to knot and form spirally a soil of devil-like soaring cordage and a living, shining hamper—frightfully lively—of their own amidst the spars. The doomed ship and its wicked crew were apparently now wholly devoted to the vengeance and destruction of the "Infernals" in the shape of Snakes—perishing in their embraces, strangled, stung.

"Axes!—powder!—fire! Scuttle the ship. Burn her!" yelled the ruffian captain as he battled with and evaded the snakes and ran from bowsprit to wheel of his ship and back again in his agonised endeavours to escape his horrid fate. The godless crew—the wretches leapt—wrestling with their horrible assailants—destroying many which were only to be succeeded by others

—like the tortured by the Furies. All was of no use. The brightness of the serpent-eyes—all of a ruby glow or shooting as it were magic emerald flames—the insupportable hiss—re-echoed by the rousing, monstrous hum and buzz amidst the thickets, hinting of yet more horrible motion—the rattling and crawl of the serpents over the decks of the ship—now almost their own in a devil-like mastery and blazing in a sort of Stygian revel, for the ship was fired—the cries, the shrieks to the Saints and for the pardon of Heaven—all these told too well their tale.

We will cease as to the sequel. Indeed was the retribution horrible. Indeed was the profanity of the wicked commander and his crew awfully punished.

Thirty years afterwards by another Portuguese discovery-ship, wandered out of its way, in those burning latitudes were the remains of the once gallant "Four Evangelists" discovered by accident. But few of the ship's ribs remained. Some gilded and painted wood, the steel weapons of the crew, now become rusted irons; beams, quaintly-nailed flooring, rotted or in powder, twenty long steel ship-guns of an outlandish mould and of a deeper green than that of the very waters in which they now quietly rolled; and fifteen skeletons—white as ivory—including that of the commander who was known by his signet-ring, worn as a mark of his rank as sea-captain in the service of the Crown of Portugal: these told the fearful tale of this; which might almost be called the snake-massacre of the terrifically-punished crew; whose guilt called up the miracle of the destruction.

Back amidst the crowding years which spring up before it like the fields of thick grain to the fleeing lark, which skims the rich brown surges of the cornlands. Now impels the magic sight which can trace the rock-like path of that Restless Genius; which can alone, in its condemned nature, attest to men's senses and understanding in the shape of the Minted Piece. The Silver Devil to be descried in the panoramas of this heavenly fresh and beautiful green world, traversing like a silver snake, sped through the years.

The wheels of time revolve; a century comes back from out of the Roads of the Past. And amidst the snow-swathed spires of the Alps, in the year of Grace 1478, we next stumble over (as it were) this latent, lurking silver-snake; lying there for doom.





CHAPTER THE NINTH.

“LITTLE EYELET.” TIME—MAY, 1478.

IN the evening of a bright hot day amidst the peaks of some of the grandest Swiss mountains, an inhabitant of the high ground, named Carl Hentzel, ascended from a valley; at the little town situated in which he had attended a market and been successful in his sales.

He had, among other things, been disposing of sundry of his goats, and some mountain cheese. And in a small leathern scrip which he carried fastened by a cord about his neck was the produce in money of his day's good luck. It was May of the year 1478—bright hot weather. And a mutter and a tumble and a roll every now and then (like thunder) told of the loosening of the snow and of the successive fall of avalanches in the stillness.

The great broad-pieces—few in number—which he had received in exchange for the animals he had sold and for his cheese contained among them ONE COIN similar in size, but of an exceedingly ancient and most puzzling appearance. It was of silver, but its glisten was of the dullest; and the coin had been probably paid to him in mistake, since its weight and its thickness proved it to be of a far greater value than the other silver pieces amongst which it, however, lay seemingly as like amidst like.

Even at this distance from his house Carl descried it, far up amidst the pine-covered rocks. And as he

hastened up the acclivities to join the woman and the child—mere dots—who seemed to have issued out of the door to gaze at him from between the mists which sullenly sailed in white strips, like long gossamer bridges, athwart the black chasms, or seemed to loop and twine like ribbons amidst the mountain spires; whilst, we say, he watched with cheerful smiles and a nod and a beck and a wave of the hand now and then to his wife and his only child—for such they were—he strained with greater and greater impatience upwards, and clambered on as if his will outgrew, indeed, that slow—that necessarily slow pace. But climbing and climbing he went on.

Unhappy man! Thou little knowest what thou bearest upwards as a prize to thy home. Thou little imaginest the character of that awful THING (and its tremendous import) which thou in all unconsciousness carriest in thy bosom to thy peaceful, thy so happy home. Thou seest not the Bad Things which follow thickly in thy path, tracking too surely thy doomed footsteps and toiling upwards to thy Ark of Safety with thee. A brand is borne by thine own hand, for fire, to thy temple of the domestic affections. Thou dreamest not in the slightest degree what that shining thing should imply which thou now extractest from thy pouch with such glee and flourishest with such semblance of triumph to thy little son as a promised gift—Oh! so long and so impatiently watched for—from out that little white dotted town in the verdant valley. Better that thou shouldst now cast it into the deepest split that ever yawned—fathomless and immeasurable—below the brows of any of those ice-slabbed juts that shoot heavenward above thee: sheer out from the noonday blackness of a monster well of perpendicular descent of perhaps a thousand feet.

But so we dream; and so do we walk blind into temptations in this world of darkness.

The little child and its mother (both) seemed to understand what was meant by the actions of Carl. For the boy clapped his hands and laughed as the silver piece of money twinkled in the sun—even from that

long distance. By-and-by Hentzel gained his dwelling. And embraces for his wife, and kisses and hugs for Little Eyelet (Carl's son), were immediately the lot of both. For the father was happy—very happy.

It was the eve of the Name-Saint of the little boy. And incense was burnt that night before the figure of the child's "patron," and fresh flowers—such as the mountain afforded—were gathered with no small pains amidst the green clefts below where they grew by the happy mother. These were intended not only to deco-



Proof of Karl Hentzel's skill with "Little Eyelet" before a strange nobleman—similar to the "archery feat" of "Tell."

rate the little nook of an oratory—crucifix-shrined—where Hentzel and his wife knelt to their daily devotions, but also to trim and to set off Little Eyelet himself, who was to wear his holiday-dress this very morrow that was coming. Happy child! He was shown overnight the fine things he was to wear on his Patron Saint's Day. There were gilt buttons and yellow ribbons with the images of the saints stamped in shining lead upon them; and Little Eyelet's heart leapt with delight. But there was a black cloud rising.

The little boy was nearly six years old, but extremely delicate in shape and small in size. His bright blue

eyes were clear as those of a cherub of heaven, and his waving locks of light gold clung to his waist and nearly reached his feet.

That night there were hollow sounds in the *valley*; and strange, mysterious rumbles of thunder woke and fell-off to sleep again as it seemed continually in the gloomed recesses of the mountains. Now and then the boom and bound and the artillery-like report of an avalanche, which mingled with the distant sound of the passing blackening or *silvering* storm (in the panoramic moonlight) disturbed the stillness up amongst these mountain solitudes.

“That will bring down the great eagle from his heights to-morrow,” said Carl to his wife as they lay quietly in bed listening to the sullen rumble and the occasional *drop* of a thunder-shot amidst the ices, as it sounded. “This will bring the great bird down out of his skies.”

“Look, Carl, at the little room!” cried Eyelet’s mother suddenly as she started up, gasping her astonishment and fright, in bed. “*It is alight*. What in the name of Little Eyelet’s blessed patron can it be?”

“Nonsense, woman, to look so frightened,” returned Carl, as he cast—half asleep—a displeased glance at the small closet-like room with its pine beams built out sideways by the side of his larger one. “It is but the reflection of the moonlight which is shining in it, like a blue candle. That is all.”

A gush of light streamed outside from the door into the passage, for where Carl and his wife lay they could see almost all their house.

“Where is Little Eyelet? Ah, where is Little Eyelet, Carl? Arise and see! Up, husband! Up!”

“All safe—foolish woman! Thou wilt, thyself, get up next,” retorted Carl. “And disturb me worse with thy fidgetings. I hear him breathing as tranquilly as a happy baby in the Garden of the Angels. Would that I were as like a child of the saints!”

Both fell asleep. All through that night—in dreams doubtless, but as she declared in her actual waking

state—delicious music, such as might have almost made you weep holy, happy tears, stole round Joanna-Mary. She thought herself bewitched as she listened to these magic strains. And with the first of the morning, when she sought her child and before she caught him (as every day she did) to her bosom and imprinted on his red, cleft rosebud of lip many kisses, there was a magic smile on his sleeping face, as if the whisper of angels and the songs of heaven had only been the accompaniment of his slumbers through the whole thundery night. There seemed the soft light from the blue pavement of heaven in his reflecting eyes.

The morrow came. When the clouds cleared—rising thick out of the valleys—and when the ice-fields began to glow up into all their colours, and to show emerald-like amidst the grey and green rocks and the many-tinted trees (the more solid portions of the glimpses, as it were, of landscape), the sun came out gloriously.

The sun brightened into intensest gold on a beautiful natural platform in front of the Chalet on which Alpine flowers grew; the delight of Little Eyelet. The boy was dressed in his best, in silk and fringes. And according to promise, and as the grandest ornament of all, his father hung the silver medal or PIECE OF STRANGE MONEY round about the child's neck.

And Carl Hentzel and his wife, Joanna-Mary, went then to attend, she to the ordinary business of their little plot of ground, and Hentzel to look after the goats. Little Eyelet was set to amuse himself with the gilt and painted pictures of the Saints in a precious missal with a silver clasp, and with a red ribbon which to him was worth a Count's ransom.

A speck—a dot—is now seen in the bright blue. Two islands, as it were, of clouds with their dazzling convolutions are seen sweeping inwards towards this dark speck, which shows from between them as a dot of a black ship beheld far out on the blue far sea. The tall spires of the mountains and the snowy *aiguilles* soaring yet higher into the translucent azure with their dozens of sun-emblazoned peaks, rangé around near or remote; shooting up as a mighty wall to a chasm prodigious; or

peering over duskier slate-covered rocks with the solid white snows traced-up as wreaths of roads—wizard-like into the magic lands.

With incredible speed the dot—or aërial voyager whatever it be—enlarges—grows more and more distinct—approaches (downwards), in its sublime “drop;” as if charged with a message from the “Olympian” himself. Two wings which beat with deliberate and majestic sound are now seen to spread broad, like sails. It is the terrible eagle of the Alps which thus descends as on an invisible line. And it is a most monstrous *lammer-geyer* if we may judge from its already so large (although so distant) figure.

The sunshine travels (as over a dial) up the side of the mountain. It leaves the valley below and the little town of white houses (almost *fearfully* gleaming *usually* in Liliputian dimensions and in seemingly unnatural close brightness), at our feet as it were, and dark in ominous shadows. The clouds and the far-up sky—blue in its depth of light—are intensely sunbright. The eagle—for it is now unmistakably one of that royal devastating brood—pauses for some time right overhead in its inexpressibly majestic descent. It hangs motionless. For a long time so still it is that the eager and fearing eye searches painfully up in the hot glare after the eagle for its place in the heavens. Though apparently without motion it is travelling fast—dropping perpendicularly to us at a prodigious rate. It swoops with scarcely a beat of its wings, but with its own native sharpness of eye unerringly to its hit point—caught by its sight from inexpressible height—as on a long right downward line. Soon an awful rushing like the whistling of a cannon-ball is heard. It alone breaks the silence of these mountain-solitudes. Like an *aerolite* the eagle drops, till in mid-air—although comparatively near—arrested doubtless by the shrill screams of the child who sees this “*air-dragon*” of the mountains, and who clings in his terror to the wooden supports which jut from the house—the giant bird sweeps *aside* with his intolerable eyes and on thundering pinions, beating deep like the resounding hammers of a forge. Thus

grandly for a moment or two the eagle circles in *retreat*. But at last—with eye fixed like fire on his prey—and wheeling—wheeling in narrower and yet narrower circles, attracted apparently and fascinated in strange power by the glitter of that fatal SILVER PIECE, he takes an upward short soar for the final plunge. And with all his feathers beating as in a storm the eagle at last swoops.

An awful shriek is heard. It is Little Eyelet's mother who rushes—*but too late*—to the rescue. She trampleth fast nearly over the precipice—at the risk of her life (but what is life at such a moment?) over the giddy stones of that terrible aëry platform under the eaves. But it is only in that instant to see, borne far aloft—snatched to destruction—and in a few seconds almost out of sight, her ill-fated child. Savagely caught up by the wild bird into his height of heaven, and finding its death, and his burial-place, amidst the inaccessible altitude and rocky steeples which are known only to the rapacious creatures forced down out of the wilds of the sky; places to which wings only may attain.

We may imagine the horror—the frightful anxiety—with which the flight of that bird was watched. He reft in his fell talons that which was all the world to the shrieking parents. The day was indeed black to them. Though sunwards the eagle flew!

From behind the house Cārl was attracted by the sight of the hovering of the eagle over his dwelling and by its sudden descent. And he instantly guessed the meaning of that fell swoop. He was one of the best marksmen of the whole country. To dart into his house for his bow, to snatch an arrow from his quiver with the speed of desperation, was now that which was done in the thought of a moment. He drew the arrow so fiercely to its head that the bent bow doubled nearly and broke clean in his hand. The tense string sprang with the force of a javelin. But at the instant that he was about to let fly and that the probably successful shaft would be flung quivering into the bird's vitals, like a flash the thought that his child was in the eagle's clutch darted into his mind, and he cast down his bow

and trampled upon it, and snapped his arrow across his knee in his mad agony ; his terrific revulsion of despair was fearful !

High—higher—highest, the bird was now winging securely up amidst the air-hung pinnacles ; bearing the child towards its nest, where rescue was hopeless, since



The "monster monument" of "Little Eyelet"—cradled, for the second time, amidst the mountains.

all was there as a perpendicular wall. The child's grave was sky-hung. Foot neither of man nor beast could win that cleft. Eye could alone reach it.

Miracle of terror, almost. The hole in the precipice to which the eagle was seen last to wing lay full in the view of the distracted father and mother opposite

(across the chasm) their very house. And there on a six-inch ledge of rock in the clouds, mocking them with its protracted horror (a tragedy whose dismal incidents were every day re-enacted ; this as soon as the sun rose and his rays fell upon that knife-like width of platform with its single cavity) there was at last left to the winds the poor body of the destroyed child until the little white skeleton alone glinted.

Day after day—month after month—year after year there fluttered (long after nought was left but a white bone and fragments of the child's clothes) finery and trimming and loose rags, the toy of the gentler or the wilder winds. This sight was the monument into the child's parents' future—long after Carl Hentzel and Joanna-Mary had forgotten in the birth and bringing-up—aye, and in the manhood and maidenhood of other children whose life was happy—their pain at the death of Little Eyelet ; their first-born.





CHAPTER THE TENTH.

THE BELLRINGERS. TIME—1433.

WE recognise again in its baleful effect the ever-traversing — never-resting — SILVER PIECE of MONEY, carrying evil.

“Run—run for your life. Marcus Mujik is for the bell-tolling. All Louvain listens to the skilful peal. Be not lost to your own honour, Bauchen Buttercuyp. Woman with such a husband in her very business—wife with so wondrous a bell-tolling, rope-pulling reputation. Away! Ere they yield the palm to thy Marcus; and that in spite thereof thou diest—diest the proper death of the overcome :—go and prevent.”

This was said by an eager woman; a neighbour; as (wonderful for a Fleming) with her eyes dilated excitedly and her palms denunciatingly outspread, she rushed into a small wooden shop or bulk stuck out on one side of the great church of St. Peter at Louvain. The church had a stupendous steeple of 533 feet in height, and was a beautiful specimen of architecture.

The woman spoken-to who boasted extraordinary resolution—and an address and talent written in every queer turn of her face and in the mould of her boldly-developed even masculine brow, threw down a curious piece of clockwork which she was busily engaged in

looking-into for repair, and she tore off her green working apron. And—stripping-up her arms to the elbows—she was in the street before the *carillons* which then set up—close by—to sound the quarter, had struck one silver-sounding bell out of the many.

The year was 1433. All Flanders was then going mad after bell-tolling and skilful clockwork. And among the most astonishing artists in this then highly-prized department of science was—singular to say—Bauchen Buttercuyp; so called from her patronymic, for her father was Bacchus Buttercuyp, a great spirit-brewer of Louvain, and a great man of the town; hard of hearing, but hard of drinking.

Bauchen was the wife of Marcus Mujik. And he was one of the most celebrated professors of this noble science of campanology to be found in all the Low Countries, or in Italy or in Spain.

This bell-ringing couple—rivals in fame and in their estimation of it—kept their quaint little shop full of valuables; and it was stuck all about with small heraldic banners noting their honours from guilds, noblemen and persons of great renown. From their reputation in handiwork—and in science—there was continual application to their shop from all sides. Nothing came amiss for them to deal in. But they were principally famous for filigree-work, locks, ornamental keys, chains, and bracelets; for queer Netherlandish clocks full of puppet mechanism, for hand-bells and white-metal trumpets for the hands of painted figures of cherubim made in wood.

Bauchen the Bellringer, when she was so urgently interrupted by her anxious female admirer in her bell-tolling accomplishment, snatched up a SILVER PIECE of MONEY (snake amidst that Garden of Eden and floral wilderness of knick-knacks, to the bell-tolling Eve). This SILVER COIN—which was of large size—had just been paid her (in mistake for one of the florins) by a customer. The customer had bought an embossed whistle for a certain eccentric public *columbarium* which he had established in conjunction with a rich but singular Brother of the Guild of Clock-Makers and

Clothiers who was half mad, but who had a turn for fancy fowl-keeping; and had contrived in his ingenuity this *columbarium* or Netherlands fowl-house.

It took not long before Bauchen was nearly round and in at the huge church-door. In the steeple of the great cathedral, for the purpose of stealing a march of display upon his dreaded rival—his own wife—the husband, the bell-toller, had already sorted his ropes to commence the grand proofs of his musical art. All the goodwives, children, and many of the men of the town were in the streets round the church, in their best clothes, intent no less on their holiday than on gazing up at the cloud-piercing steeple; from which they expected soon to hear those ravishing sounds coming as if from the heavens themselves. As Bauchen passed through, among her neighbours, she was greeted—even for Flemings—with enthusiastic plaudits, and a cheer that set her heart bounding. It is a sad thing to say, but she was (in fact) the only possible rival of her husband in the whole district; and she was the one from whom indeed he knew he had the most to dread, and the most relentless opposition to look for. But her attention being called to her lack of her ornaments, Bauchen hastened indoors again—even with a speed that seemed most marked and malicious—to fetch her Corporation-medal, presented her by the Burgomaster and the Syndics for some feat in that queer art to which she was devoted.

But now a rare bell-tolling began indeed from the steeple. And the wife—with ears sharpened by an agony of impatience and emulation—recognised the full, ingenious, truly grand inspiration among the bells of her enthusiastic husband—questionless a prince in his art. Her hands tingled with anxiety—indeed with suppressed *rage*—as if she already grasped a rope to surpass him. She flew along, leaving the posts behind her, in the rear of which, all in a row, were congregated her excited townspeople; now fairly enthusiastic by Marcus Mujik's astonishing feats upon his bells. They called aloud, however, that his wife—the Amazon of the Bell—"should soon outdo him." The SILVER PIECE of MONEY burned in her bosom; to the folds of

her garment covering which she had committed it, in her haste, when summoned out to this perilous trial-display.

And now the rocking steeple saw *four* hands employed upon the ropes for the ringing of those grand bells. For the mechanism of them was so perfect that in comparison slight exertions were alone necessary for the most tremendous effects, and to produce the most beautiful music. Flights of the bell-notes were flung out as it were of the belfry windows like presents to Paradise. And as he stood opposite, in his turn, working like the Archangel Michael amid serpents at the rebellious ropes, trampling them victoriously up into



The spire of the great church.

heaven's own blessed music, and watching his almost now murderously jealous wife with triumphant light askance out of his eyes, she was astonished at his nearly supernatural bell-tolling achievement. Never perhaps had man pulled so well. Powers other than human—an angelic group of Unseen-ringing Presences—seemed employed in realising the most exquisite bell-like effects. And after one superb flourish, as if of entry into heaven, a cheer—such a cheer as never rises but after battle fought and victory won:—this rose from below. It

carried joy to his heart. But his now utterly jealous and maddened wife—possessed by a devil as it were—plunged upon him unawares; and catching a smile of complacent triumph on his lips as he raised his thanking eyes to heaven, she grappled him like a Nemesis or a Norwegian Fury; and she thrust him forth—spite of



A celebration in Louvain.

the fearful clutch which grasped for life the irons of it—out of a large *quatrefeuille* of the enormously high steeple. Half way down which (indeed) the clouds almost rolled and spread flat along. Such a shrill cry of horror rose from the crowd below as staggered. The

terror-stricken woman—now recalled to herself—her arms wide-stretched as if at once in shrieking appeal and denunciation upon the bell behind; which in its hollow-sounding last swing only groaned deep out a sort of doleful thunder-roll as its knell over revenge and mad art-jealousy—even of a husband. It smote loud condemnation and told death to her on the clashing air. And thus was a strange Flemish Tragedy, to which the great thundering bells supplied the “choral,” enacted in the Steeple of the Great Church of Louvain. And this was the end of Marcus Mujik the Bell-toller. All was the work of the fiend winged on the SILVER PIECE, as it wrought its magic in its invisible errand through the air, even in the bells.

Our detached episodes are only special illustrations of the power of the SILVER PIECE. It is as the true and ubiquitous hero of our legendary tale that we adduce the phases of the life of this seemingly unliving thing; gifted as it may however be with a devil.

On the previous page we give the representation (copied from an old picture) of the celebration, in Louvain, at once of the triumph of the Great Female Bell-toller, and of the obsequies of the renowned Marcus Mujik, her vanquished, (dead), husband.





The "Three Nails" of the Passion according to the Greek Rite.

CHAPTER THE ELEVENTH.

THE TEMPLAR TRIAL. TIME—1312.

THE year is 1312—that of the general suppression, all over Europe, of the order of the Knights Templars. Paris gives the first signal of the sacrifice. England follows. Europe completes its frightful task.

Jacques Molay, Grand Master of the Templars, places his hand in a bag of silver which he has commanded to be brought to him out of the treasure-chests during a secret Chapter of his order. And he gives unknowingly a SILVER PIECE to a Knight. It is remarked not in its similitude to the others. But it is in reality the mysterious wandering PIECE which travels—like a spark from out of the pit of Orcus—from country to country—surviving through all time;—white, wan, and woeful.

“Thou art sworn to poverty. This is to help thee towards Jerusalem. Thy brethren shall give thee food and raiment on the way. This is as a gift from thy father-ruler; this be thy talisman.”

Charles De Ramus set out on his long journey. He esteemed the SILVER PIECE of MONEY as a gift most considerable and not to be parted with under any temptation; since it was bestowed upon him by his revered Grand Master. And therefore he carried it by night

and by day in the palm of his steel gauntlet. But at Vienna his progress was arrested. And he was seized and thrown into a dungeon, being charged upon his badges of Templar recognition with participation in the scandals and crimes then so suddenly and so frightfully imputed to his whole Order, and to which they fell sacrifice.



Vault where the unhappy De Ramus—the "Last of the Templars"—was buried.

Horrors with the Templar great-ones were enacted in Paris. And in due time the unhappy De Ramus was brought-up on the charge before a council especially convoked to try the monstrous sins laid to the door of these priestly guardians of the Temple through all their various degrees of age and rank. And he was a knight of the order, though not high advanced in it; and therefore he was held responsible for the supposed crimes.

“Knowest thou Baffometus the Horrible? knowest thou ‘Bophomet?’” was the question put in a whisper as if he who put the question shuddered at the name. This man was one of those inexorable judges who after three days of untold-of suffering of the young Templar had him brought bound before him. De Ramus was sinking worn and white to the earth; being already more than half destroyed in the tortures during these three days adjudged him for all sorts of trials for his secrets.

“I know not the name, ye devils of men. I seek death. And my fierce words may force it from ye; for ye have rent-up my flesh and pierced me.”

“Place the torches about him that we may witness his last writhing,” said the arch-inquisitor. “Son of the Devil, what be the treasures of thy lodge; which, when we have obtained, we shall cast in the sea?”

“They are not of my keeping,” replied De Ramus. “I was not high enough in the sacred Templar ranks for their charge, or for knowledge of them.” And at this Ramus fainted away.

“Render me thy secret password,” demanded the judge when they had, with difficulty, recovered the prisoner.

“Never—while my lips may deny it. Faithful will I be to my oath, even unto death.”

“Kneel down then,” said the judge. The late Knight knelt. “I hand thee to thy dead masters. Axeman, do thy duty. Strike; and once for all!”

And with one blow of the bright blade of a monstrous axe the Templar was freed from the persecution of this cruel Tribunal; to which he fell so suddenly and so unhappily, a quick victim. His head flew from his body.

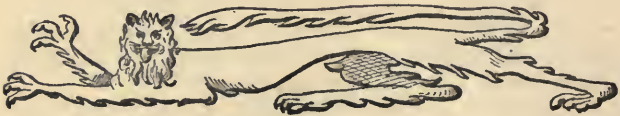




CHAPTER THE TWELFTH.

THE ALARMS OF THE DESERT. TIME—1220.

UNTO the Desert—unto the place of sands and of the overarching sky, hot in the glare of intolerable sun—hath the SILVER PIECE passed. With the restless day perpetually hurrying-on the hours to the fires of the sunset and through the starred or star-



Device on the Pennon of Dent D'Airain.

less night urgeth that Silver Symbol, producing in its magic, and irritating into life, with its charmed gifts, the evils that shall be the lot of its temporary possessor; and only to be shaken free-of by the parting with this migratory, persecuting curse to some other new and unsuspecting hand. Such are the terms of the immortality of this fiendish silver sign through the ages. The

plagues of which are terrible, and its whereabouts mysterious.

It is the time of the Crusades. Europe precipitates in its valorous outbreak of enthusiasm upon the dusk Saracen chivalry for the recovery of the Holy Tomb. The sands engulf passing divisions of the present new crusading army. The ranks of steel gather into themselves the flames, and in return are more or less consumed in the fierce suns of Palestine. But the glorious red cross, and the whole snowy banner of St. George upon which the red cross shows, the black and white, party-divided *Beauséant* of the soldier-priests of the order of the Temple, the lilies of France, and her *Ori flamme* or flame of gold, and the multiform cognisances of the knightly hordes out of Italy, out of Spain, and belonging to the Kingdom of the Latins; these with all the myriad and with that rich wilderness of heraldic devices, cover with its inundation of colours and of metals, with its cloud of steel armours and of glittering lances, the valleys and the steps, and the dun wastes and the hot mountain-tops of Israel and of Syria, of Judah and of the Biblical principalities golden and glaring.

Dent D'Airain and Gomer De Tedesco, two crusading chieftains with a strong force of knights and of men-at-arms, are passing slowly through the desert on a hot afternoon, and are gasping for air and looking about them in a consuming intense thirst. Women accompany them. Dent D'Airain, a bold and daring leader, is bearing away an Eastern princess of unspeakable beauty, the daughter of an Arab emir. And he seeks now safety and shelter for his prize in the tents of the crusaders; then wholly camped before the white-walled Ptolemais in the expectation of storming it.

"How farest thou, Gomer de Tedesco? Friend of my banner, who hast aided it often in the moment of need in battle-rout or in single tilt! Nay, I say, the friend of my dear heart. Stand'st thou bravely these fierce flames of the desert—this breath of the furnace?"

which well-nigh scorches-up mine heart—however large—within the very steel bracings which ought to keep out sun and stroke of steel?”

“How about thy princess Hermengilda? The last skins of the liquid element or costly water have been lavished, because they are hers, amidst her camels. Shall not her very jewels almost melt in the ardour of this—Oh! far too overpowering sun of Palestine? Or shall the rubies not blaze the more redly to it as fired sanguinely in the sun of the desert?”

“She is cared for,” returned Dent D’Airain. “Painted awnings are carried in multitude over her. Fainting slaves—black as that Sathanas of whom churchmen talk—fan her, though they fall. Were forty of them to die, yet shall not my beauteous lily have one of its petals over-heated in this elemental fire of Afric. Truly an enchanter’s burning is about us, and under us, and over us.”

To beguile the way and to elude, if possible, the thirst which so sorely troubled the whole caravan, the two chiefs set their men to play; and they gambled, themselves, for handfuls of precious coin. And medals and rings, and jewels of price having several times changed hands amidst this godless and dissolute knightly crew, a SILVER COIN was at last produced by Gomer De Tedesco. Which in one throw was lost to Dent D’Airain. It was the famous SILVER PIECE. And it was said by Gomer to have been given him in a pilgrimage by a white-bearded hermit of Mount Libanus.

Dent D’Airain laughed in triumph, and untwining his laps of chain-armor and twists of rings he dropped the PIECE of SILVER into a little bag of spikenard which he wore close over his heart. His thirst was immediately appeased and a refreshing coolness and many delightful sensations soon displayed their welcome effect over all his flesh. And at that moment he descried (in a strange joy) an Arab horseman with lance that glittered sharp even from the great distance careering over the, (else,) totally solitary expanse of de-

sert sand; coming out of a cloud and going into a cloud.

“A man, a man!” Dent D’Airain cried. “Speak him. He brings strange news. Great news.”

He did indeed bring great news; for he was only a magic figure bringing Doom to the bold knight. The passing horseman was nothing than a chance-projected figure, so it was afterwards said, suddenly painted out of the colours and concentrated in the condensed vitality of the landscape, and flung-out of—as it were—the magic-lantern of the all-powerful MASTERS of the SILVER COIN for ruin and for dole.

But no one beside Dent D’Airain himself could see aught but the sky stretching for miles and miles, cloudless above, and the sea of dun desert. Nor could any one understand the strange mad exultation with which the Crusader spoke and pointed afar-off. His friends almost indeed feared that he had gone suddenly deranged in the intense heat, though his countenance contradicted such a supposition; for he was collected enough.

And so on this military caravan journeyed. They sought to beguile their steps with tale—even with song or chorus. But their voices seemed stifled in their throats. And the gay song and the carouse of a chorus declined into feeble hymns, and fell off at last into the choral chant of a half Latin, half *Provençal* Litany;—almost ridiculous in its quavers partly of fear and partly of incompetency. With which latter fact of singing, indeed, the terrors of the desert little consisted at any time; and less now.

It is in vain for men who dwell in crowded capitals, and who flock into populous community, to place before them the true picture of the superstitious brooding which besets the mind in these depressing wastes. And the East in all its parts hath terror of its own and influences of its own, in its mingled and almost dream-influenced life.

That which may be called the panoramic history of all nations of the East is so rich in strange and

romantic events and mysterious terrible suggestions ; the tales of wonder and the supernatural, tenacious beliefs that abound through it strike such deep root and are so all-pervading and aweing, that the name of this East must always inspire a charm. Another life—a phantom-life—seems to us as the watch and witness of all Oriental occurrences. Unseen guardians still walk amidst its ruined citadels and abandoned cities. And its crumbling monuments, by man forsaken, are sentinelled by other and higher intelligences. Buried treasures of incalculable value, and genii-guarded stores of the richest ; also accumulations of gems and spoil of fabulous character and surprises to an unbelievable extent, are supposed to be still scattered—for ever lost, or almost hopelessly so, to the curiosity of man. And these are distributed over all the ancient kingdoms of Asia, and even over those old realms whose existence, though true, has nearly been melted up as into the disbelief of them of history.

And the traditions of the shadowy beings who guard and warn-off seekers from these occult heaps—this wealth of glorious material things—are overpowering and cogent in almost all corners of the Vast East.

Every ruin in the East has its Spirit. But the Desert is the place to which the apparitions of the whole earth are supposed to be relegated.

“But, in a field where of necessity we are so much limited, we willingly pass from the consideration of these treasure or *khasne* phantoms (which alone sufficiently insure a swarm of ghostly terrors for all Oriental ruins of cities) to the same marvellous apparitions, as they haunt other solitudes even more awful than those of ruined cities. In this world there are two mighty forms of perfect solitude—the ocean and the desert: the wilderness of the barren sands, and the wilderness of the barren waters. Both are the parents of inevitable superstitions—of terrors, solemn, ineradicable, eternal. Sailors and the children of the desert are alike overrun with spiritual hauntings, from accidents of peril essentially connected with those

modes of life, and from the eternal spectacle of the infinite. Voices seem to blend with the raving of the sea, which will for ever impress the feeling of beings more than human, and every chamber of the great wilderness which, with little interruption, stretches from the Euphrates to the western shores of Africa, has its own peculiar terrors both as to sights and sounds. In the wilderness of Zin, between Palestine and the Red Sea, a section of the desert well known in these days to our own countrymen, *bells are heard daily pealing for matins, or for vespers, from some phantom-convent that no search of Christian or of Bedouin Arab has ever been able to discover. These bells have sounded since the Crusades.*

“Other sounds, trumpets, the *Alala* of armies, &c., are heard in other regions of the Desert. Forms, also, are seen of more people than have any right to be walking in human paths; sometimes forms of avowed terror; sometimes, which is a case of far more danger, appearances that mimic the shapes of men, and even of friends or comrades. This is a case much dwelt on by the old travellers, and which throws a gloom over the spirits of all Bedouins, and of every *cafila* or caravan. We all know what a sensation of loneliness or ‘eeriness’ (to use an expressive term of the ballad poetry) arises to any small party assembling in a single room of a vast desolate mansion: how the timid among them fancy continually that they hear some remote door opening, or trace the sound of suppressed footsteps from some distant staircase. Such is the feeling in the desert even in the midst of the caravan. The mighty solitude is seen, the dread silence is anticipated which will succeed to this brief transit of men, camels, and horses. Awe prevails even in the midst of society; but if the traveller should loiter behind from fatigue, or be so imprudent as to ramble aside—should he, from any cause, once lose sight of his party, it is held that his chance is small of recovering their traces. And why? Not chiefly from the want of footmarks, where the wind effaces all impressions in half-an-hour, or of

eyemarks, where all is one blank ocean of sand, but much more from the sounds or the visual appearances which are supposed to beset and to seduce all insulated wanderers."



Byzantine Crucifix worn over his white kirtle by the Knight, Gomer de Tedesco.



THE SAND-STORM. TIME—1220.

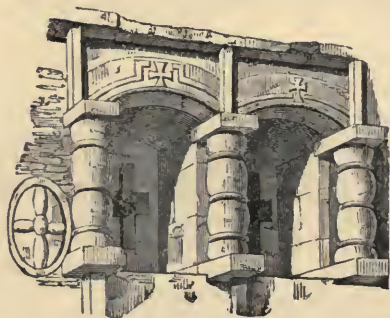
AFTER three days' further fearful journeying, buried in the heart of the desert but spreading as it were a green carpet in the midst of the terrific waste, Dent D'Airain and his chivalric company found a large *oasis*, in the midst of which rose pleasantly the spiry, dome-covered towers of a Greek Monastery, very beautiful to see and a great surprise.

Here, when their approach was descried from the building, a train of monks with Alexius their abbot at their head issued out to meet them. They came up with skins of water and hospitable provender to refresh. And the bells of the holy house—strange sounds in the desert—were heard to toll, as with the benevolently hospitable welcome, and with many a priestly benediction the armed company were admitted within the monastery and cheered with wine and good food. They were also invited to unarm and lie down to rest.

“We will deck thy sacred walls with our steel clothing, reverend Father Alexius,” said the leader D'Airain. “And our horses and camels shall we stall in thy columned cloisters and beside thy beautiful Gothic-work fountains. And there shall arrive peace to our hearts and sleep to our eyes during these fierce hours of daylight-heat. But we shall pray your pardon if we, jealous knights, in our never-omitted soldierly practice, place guards not only over ourselves but over the arms

whereof we have so gladly disburthened, and which stand piled in thy great hot court. And this damsel of princely descent and her women — although no Christians—in all honour do we hand to your keeping. And as we have store of wealth we shall bestow of it and win your well-wishing—even your hearty thankful farewell.” This was spoken by Dent D’Airain when he had dismounted from his horse.

“So be it all, my son,” said the Father Alexius. And he departed into his oratory to confer with his Sub-Priors Apollinaris and Umbre. This upon points needful apparently for the accommodation of his guests.



“Triform of the Monastery, with its quaint pillars and sculpture—afterwards buried in sand.”

When the Father Alexius and his subordinates Apollinaris and Umbre entered the rich oratory, decorated with gold and precious stones—even in the desert—the Father Alexius closed carefully the doors and went and sat in his chair of state. He turned to Umbre, who sat deeply thinking—

“Devise something in thy keen wisdom, Brother Umbre. Thine ingenuity hath before this helped us well. Half of the gold and precious things in our *penetralia* is of thy indirect getting. As half of the anatomies of men hung up as curious memorials in our crypt is of thy indirect placing. This desert-road hath at bye-times been as a road of Mammon—paven hither-

ward with gold slabs—to us. This suspicious handsome crusader hath set guards over himself and over that he watches and carries. Otherwise in their sleep this very fierce noon might we have destroyed them all. And their camels bear rich booty. We have lured them fairly to wreck with our cheerful holy bells.”

“Not one of the troop must away to tell the tale of those strange sacrificing services to which, when we win sojourners within our gates, it is our wont in our tolling to invite. Our net hath closed round the caravan. Distress yourself not, father, concerning the putting of the men to death. They are *ours*—and, yea, is their spoil ours—despite all their steel.” This was said by Umbre with knitted brows.

“So be it, my son,” replied the Father Abbot. “I leave it to your manifold arts. Are our brethren warned so to conduct themselves to the men as to secure us?”

“They are,” said Apollinaris. “And either with chemical secrets or with the open violent hand is this entire goodly company (and all the precious things with which their camels are loaded) our own. The caves of rock beneath our spiry monastery shall alone, perchance, on some future remote day give account of them!”

“Of dun purple colour is the sky, and thick are the desert-clouds which have won so singularly and so suddenly up over the half of our burning heaven,” remarked Alexius to his confederates as they returned along the galleries to the marble chambers in which they had left, scattered, their knightly company. All that was so bright before was now growing strangely dark as in an eclipse.

When the flagitious abbot and his murderous confederates returned to the knights and their followers, they found them in a state of considerable anger and impatience. The absence of their hosts, whom, with true military imperiousness, this warlike company looked upon as almost like servants bound to attend to their wants, and whom they expected to suspend services and the psalms which they blasphemously sang to the desert winds—this apparent forgetfulness of their guests as soon as they had entered within their walls drew dis-

pleased remark and many exclamations of disgust from the rude men of war who gathered and sneered round about the holy men.

“Come, sir priest!” said Gomer De Tedesco when the Abbot appeared, “we need a well-spread board, not mumbled welcomes—liquid to cool our blood, not prayers, now, or psalms. We want wine and not bell-tolling—fruits and confections, not canticles or candle-carrying—except to the banquet-table or to bed. . Out with thy store! For we guess shrewdly that thou hast the usual abundant priestly provender—which if it credits thy grand house should be indeed royal. I and my men—the knight Dent D’Airain my brother in our country’s loyallest crusading bands of steel—yea, all his caravan and cavalcade of women—black and white—shall to the tables. And we will have a jolly monk to sit between each of us to see that we lack nought (if he tastes nothing) and to keep us with his lewd songs in countenance over our delicacies. Though ye—no offence to ye, priests—look much more like a den of withered wolves than as gracious graceful monks.”

The proposal of one monk sitting between two knights was fulfilled to the letter. For—interjected between each of the armed men—all down the sides of the long table—there sat a priest in his cowl from under which his eyes glittered like a Devil. At the top of the table, side by side sat Dent D’Airain and Alexius; with the fainting and alarmed Hermengilda—scandalised and pale at the bold and lustful looks of the warriors which Dent D’Airain scarcely repressed; and at the sinister and boding glances of the religious. Two or three of her excessively beautiful Arab women who clung to each other in fright and were sparkling all over with gold were at her side. At the other end of the table Gomer De Tedesco—who would not part with his sheathed glaive—sat in a great seat, supported in strange propinquity on either hand by the Sub-Priors Umbre and Apollinaris. Altogether it looked a grim and fearful company indeed. And the momentarily increasing darkness out of the building—although it was noonday—added to the awe and alarm of the scene. Which scene was however splendid

to a degree from the gold and silver vessels—filled with wine—and from the rich food in choice dishes of carved silver which covered the table. And which cups and dishes were thrown crashing to the floor when the riot deepened, and when fear was exchanged for clashing assassination.

There was then a noise as of long-rumbling underground thunder. The air grew denser, darker, blacker. Looking out of window the whole desert seemed *flatly rising*, far as the horizon extended, like a sea. And the sky—suddenly changed into darkness from the clouds of sand that filled it—appeared to be *descending*—from the zenith to the horizon—terribly to meet it. Earthquake, hurricane, horror seemed imminent. But in the glare of light—for torches had long ere this been brought and the priestly company and the knights alike caroused or watched suspiciously in hell's own red illumination—the sight without was unnoticed. At that moment a drunken knight seized the hand of one of the false monks which was clutching too soon at the gigantic emerald boss of a gold-collar which he wore, now swinging at the end of broken links.

“Robber-priest,” the knight shouted, starting to his feet and striking his mailed hand on the table, so that he struck, now, magic green fire from his own split emerald. “Dog of a false monk, there is treachery in this vile damnable banquet of thine. Comrades, to your arms! We are betrayed.”

But, alas, they *had* no arms. And after the knights had felt vainly at their sides for their swords all became an instant deadly grapple between soldiers and priests in which (even) the former had the worst. Gomer De Tedesco indeed bared his sword like lightning and struck through in instant thrust the robe of the archvillain Umbre, from which blood sprang.

“Hold, madmen,” cried Alexius. “Your efforts are the struggle of the hopeless! Ye are mine. Mine utter prey. Ye are all poisoned, ye men of swords. Your cups were filled from mine own fell barrel with a juice which slacketh not in its deadly work.”

There was a shriek of horror at this. But despera-

tion and the determination to avenge their destruction supplied a power prodigious to the soldiers. And flinging off the robber-band of false monks, all the knightly company broke away and seized their weapons piled high in the marble court—now dark as the Forum of Pompeii before its extinction under the ashes of Vesuvius.

Ah, *dark—darker—darkest* grows the sky overhead! Awfully it deepens—from the bright blue at first with the fleecy clouds for heaven's islands, (and with the sun's light all-pervading,) to the infinite of "purple;" whence, from the supernatural spaces—God's spaces—the tremendous stars peep out—sharpening—sparkling—at high day. Mortal man—in that insupportably terrific hour, would seek escape *even down and through* the solid world!—winged to penetrate through the thickest globe itself with magic, piercing *horror*—startling the Realms of the Gnomes.

Lo, in the possible wildernesses within the great round earth itself, the lights of the PANDEMONIA begin to glow; and, dusk and terrible, the myriads of the Populace of Hell come gleaming—spreading—slow upon the vision. For the Hour of Doom upon this profaned Convent has come. Thrones of the Great Devil's Hold, evoke! Thine is this engulfment—this hollow great grave for the specious holy building. Rise, ye Bad Angels in your dusky light—once known—*now again known!*

Staggering, and in some instances falling, as they forced their way back into the banquet-hall—for the potent poison had 'by this time begun its deadly work and they were writhing in frightful pains—the knights and their men forced the ruffian crew actually to drain—at swords' point—of the very poison they had themselves brewed for their victims. So all beneath that profaned roof were even now involved in one common doom—falling one after the other—hosts and guests intermingled—to a floor streaming at once with wine and poison and glaring in dreadful lights.

And now down—down slowly—the whole edifice sank with its spires and turrets as if the earth had been hol-

lowed-out beneath to receive it. The roofs and the crosses were torn off by a fierce wind, and cataracts as it seemed of sand poured like the sea into the hollow of the convent. A great gulf was scooped as it appeared in the vast heart of the trackless desert for its tomb. And to the awful music of the tolling of the bells in its minarets as the very foundations of the desert-sands seemed to roll to and fro under them, rocking all like the masts of ships, did the great convent sink like a huge ship. It was enveloped in the surges of sand which from every side wheeled like mountain billows in a new, prodigious, and unheard-of whirlpool; swallowing the robber-priests and their victims alike in their now judgment-overwhelmed hold. And leaving the very name of the community, of monks as well as the site of their monastery, a word of scandal, a tradition and a horror to the future generations to be cited in future history.

They say that the bells of this magic monastery are *still to be heard* dully tolling under the sands of the great desert; and that the faint sounds are occasionally caught in the halt of the solitary caravan even to this day.





CHAPTER THE THIRTEENTH.

THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS. TIME—1066.

CENTURIES pass, but the ever-living PIECE of MONEY—indestructible in the charm which it carries, in itself, through Time—still circulates. And this fatal One of the Thirty *may be even in London now.*

Simon D'Aumerle,* lord of Varenne, was marching through the woods of Mequinier with his Norman long-bowmen to join the Great Duke William, the intending invader of England. The ruler of Normandy with his ships full loaded with warriors was about to invade the Kingdom of England with assurances of success from the Pope.

As he passed through a village of wooden houses with his large Norman hound closely following—within the roar of the smithy fortunately—his white war-horse cast one of his steel shoes and began limping; to his rider's dismay.

“A misfortune this,” cried Simon. “Which however might have been worse. Forward, men-at-arms, with your large kite-shaped shields which will keep the

* Refer to the story of his descendant, Mr. Merle—the obdurate father—at page 163 *ante*. There were two Simons D'Aumerle, ancestors of Mr. Merle, Colonial Broker, of St. Helen's Place, Bishopsgate, (see *Post-Office Directory* for 1858). One was the Simon D'Aumerle who fell—as above related—in the Battle of Hastings. The other was the Sir Simon D'Aumerle who is described as sailing to France at page 162.

sun off. And make for the road between the hills yonder, into which I will follow you soon but slowly. Priaulx and Petrus, take you my great banner with its guard and move by the *paven* way. Let the scouts and the light-armed men hover on the right. And move cheerily in the name and to the song of Roland. For the sun is declining towards its westerly harbourage, and we ought ere this to have been fifteen leagues forward. Richard Destrelles, thou art my squire of the body. Help me to dismount. And take my steed to the good-man farrier there, who (for fault of a better) must fit my brave horse, 'Whitestar,' with his new fore-shoe; which shall be a fortunate shoe."

Richard Destrelles rode up. His master threw him his reins; and then, cased in his chain-mail and with his mail-hood or *camaille* loosely jingling like a purse of steel, the Norman chieftain with infinite weight and labour—for he was a heavy man—got to his feet; and he sat down by the side of the road.

The horse was shod while the warrior waited. And the Farrier with low-bent head stood still till the potent Norman Sub-Baron (for he was only a feudatory) had again attained to saddle-tree, and had looked with pleasure at the shoemaker.

"My thanks are yours, friend, for your labour. For my horse feels easier already in your good steel shoe. And now to pay for this cast of thy trade. Furgeon, out with my travelling money-bag. And hand over to this good man a gold piece for this brisk turn of his farrier's skill."

The Norman lord rode on with a chosen few of his men-at-arms while his Esquire Destrelles remained behind to do as his master ordered, and pay the farrier. With many genuflections and with unbonneted head the man received his munificent gift for this chance exercise of his equestrian-fitting handicraft.

"This is too much for thee, churl—this gold piece which my careless lord—careless I mean of his money—hath bestowed on thee," said Destrelles, who was avaricious and tyrannical, and in every way a bad man; being cruel and envious.

The farrier, who was well broken-in to feudal humbleness, anticipated the frowning denial of his guerdon by the Squire; and he submissively said—bending low, though he looked sly—

“Aught then that my lord pleaseth—or that his worshipful squire deemeth right—shall be thankfully accepted by Stephen the Farrier; who may live after him.”

“Give me, in that case, as change out of thy hoard—for I know thou hast a hoard—seven silver crowns. And then shall we be quits, and I be content; and you shall live as long after me as you like.”

The Farrier went into his house and reappeared with a large leathern bag filled-out with nails and a steel horse-shoe, from which bag he produced and counted with due deliberation into the greedy Squire’s hand, the seven coins he demanded. There was ONE in the number that bore mysterious Chaldæan marks.

“Away now, and say nought of this or thou shalt



“Beware, Lord of Aumerle! thou carriest in thy company that with the brand.
Beware, mailed Lord!”

be hanged,” said the Squire. And he rode on after his master, trying to gather pace.

As Simon D’Aumerle and his company of spears the next day passed a hovel in a wood at the door of which an old crone sat, rocking herself in the slant sun and listening in the hush to the sounds in the last

of evening, she started to her feet suddenly, and shaking her finger derisively, called after the troop—as if she saw something or heard something.

“Beware, Lord of Aumerle. Thou carriest in thy company that with the brand which shall smite thee and kill thee. Look out when the hustling of war-steeds and the shock of battle are on the wind. Beware, mailed lord, and turn back.”

“A malicious witch,” was the contemptuous exclamation, in answer, of the Norman lord; when what the woman said had been repeated by some of his men who had remained behind to hear what she was going to say. All and more was conveyed to him by his half-frightened but officious attendants; who turned pale, not perhaps for their leader but for themselves.

William the Norman and his bold barons and his motley force of mailed feudatories and of the great foreign archery flocking to his aid, passed over into England. And now were the two opposing armies preparing for the great Battle of Hastings; but very differently occupied.

Fear prevailed in both camps. The English, in addition to the apprehensions which even the most tough-hearted feel on the eve of a morrow whose close they may never see, dreaded the papal excommunication, the curse encountered in support of the unlawful authority of a usurper. When they were informed that battle had been decided upon, they stormed and swore; and now the cowardice of conscience spurred them into riot and revelry. The whole night was passed in debauch. “Wæs-heal” and “Drink-heal” resounded from the tents; the wine cups passed gaily round and round by the smoky blaze of the red watch-fires, while the ballad of ribald mirth was loudly sung by the carousers.

The sun sank through clouds and shone golden over the sea.

“Give me some crowns as the *largesse* to this harper,” said Simon D’Aumerle now in the camp, after he had been listening *pensively* again to the “Song of Roland” sung grandly by a certain able minstrel. He roused himself as if by an effort to speak.

The coins were given to his chieftain by Destrelles. ONE remained after the harper had paid his honours to the liberal knight and had gone. And this SILVER PIECE, when he was suddenly summoned to the holy service, the Norman chief threw carelessly into his glove of mail. But that ONE was decisive of his fate. And he went into battle with it in his glove on the morrow.

There was grave deliberation and eager care in the Norman "leaguer," as it was called. The solemn response of the Litany and the chant of the psalm alone were heard from the lanes of tents in that silent night;



"The minstrel Taillefer was ordered to sing the song, or hymn, of Charlemagne (or of Roland).

except that it was now and then disturbed by the low clash of steel.

The English were in the morning found to be strongly fortified, in their position, by lines of trenches and palisades. They drew themselves up, in Danish fashion, shield against shield. The men of Kent formed the vanguard. The burgesses of London composed the royal body-guard; and they were drawn-up around the Standard. Harold, his brothers Leofwin and Gurth, and a chosen body of the bravest Thanes, took post in front. But, before the battle—early in the morning of St. Calixtus—volunteers from the County of Boulogne, and from the Aminnois, under the command of Fitz-

Osbern and Roger Montgomery, joined Duke William. The Norman forces were now put in battle array. And the combined cohorts under Aimeric, Viscount of Thouars, and Alan Fergant of Brittany, commenced battle with the no less eager English. The minstrel Taillefer, advancing before the consecrated Gonfanon, or great banner, had the honour of leading, singing and armed, into the fight. He sang the song or hymn of Charlemagne (or of "Roland") descriptive, under God, of the achievements of the Paladins, and the strife in the dolorous pass of Roncevaux or Roncesvalles.

But the English, glittering in their mail, met the Norman chivalry bravely. They routed their enemies in all directions and forced them back into a trench; where horses and riders fell upon each other in fearful confusion. More Normans were slain here than in any other part of the field. The fierce Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, the Duke's half-brother, distinguished himself greatly in his many furious attempts upon Harold's divisions. From nine in the morning to three, the battle was fought with varying success; the English suffering severely when they sought to improve the demolition effected by their charges from the vigorously plied artillery of the Normans. The foreign bowmen, instead of shooting point-blank, were now ordered to pause; and in their next discharges the flights of the arrows were all directed upward. One English Thane, armed with a battle-axe, spread dismay amongst the Frenchmen. He was cut down by Roger de Montgomery and his armour fell in steel splinters. The Normans have preserved the name of the Norman; but that of the Englishman is left in oblivion.

A cry is raised, in the invaders' ranks, that the Duke is slain. Confusion is the instant consequence amongst the Norman soldiers; deepening every moment into flight, there is a break in the battle. William hastens into the press, throws off his helmet, gallops hither and thither, pale as ashes amongst his men, and rallies a number. The valiant Harold, who fights like a hero, is at this moment wounded, like lightning, in the left eye by an arrow. He drops from his steed in agony, and is

borne fainting to the foot of his torn standard. The English give way on all sides, and retreat upon the king's standard as their grand rallying-point. The Normans press forward. And Robert Fitz-Ernest, who has almost seized the Saxon banner, is struck down at the foot of it and killed in his blood. William in another part of the field receives such a stroke on his helmet from an English horseman that he is nearly brought to the ground. The Kentish-men and East Saxons rally in advance of the last wavering line. But

THE BATTLE OF HASTINGS.



“Harold drops from his steed in agony, and is borne fainting to the foot of his torn standard.”

Harold is no longer amongst them. Gurth, combating bravely on foot at the base of the standard, falls by the falchion of William; who now at the head of his main-body has forced forward. The English banner is cast down amidst the dead bodies and the Gonfanon is planted in its place.

It is now late in the evening. The English troops are entirely broken; yet has no Englishman been found to yield his ground except with death or frightful wounds. With nought less than with the sternest maintenance, each man of his place, the English have withstood—overwhelmed with force alone, and mastered with that which no valour and no devotion could countervail permanently, or resist.

We recur to Simon D'Aumerle. At the head of his

knights and the meaner lancemen he charged furiously again and again a body of Harold's bravest axemen. The whole air was in one resounding din of leathern targets and of the clashing of swords. The flights of arrows sang a hissing chorus in a cloud. The Norman cavalry, breast to breast, galloped fiercely hither and thither over the field; trampling the wounded and the dead alike, and overturning bodily the more rudely armed and less highly disciplined warriors of the English king. They penetrated deep in Simon D'Aumerle's part of the field into several of the huge wedge-like bodies of men into which Harold had divided that portion of his more reliable force. The pennons with their emblazonments "flashed like dropped stars" in all directions over the country covered by the battle; and the glitter here and there attested this valiantly contested battle-ground's fierceness.

And the Norman army until besmirched with dust and blood and disarranged and broken by the fury of the contest—which clouded all their glory and used their brilliance utterly up—shone like a cloud of silver with its long lines of knights with dots, in places, of red and blue flags.

In a crowd of contending horsemen and shouting his war-cry in heroic self-exultation—which cry was drowned in the ring and stroke of unnumbered axes and in the thrust and splinter of the thousand lightning-like lances—Simon D'Aumerle fought like the world's champion. But there came three arrows in quick succession; and they struck through the close chain-mail of the Norman lord, quivering in his body where they hit. His war-horse—which was wounded by a sword—reared high at this tremendous moment and made as if he would altogether overturn. As Simon turned his head to snatch in the reins, at the same time guarding his left side with his great shield, a side-blow of an axe (from a charging Englishman), descending with terrific weight, clove his steel basinet right through. And down the gallant Norman leader fell, bearing into the dust with him the luckless SILVER PIECE; which flew upwards out of his hand like a star.

How appropriately may we finish with the inscription on the tomb of the unfortunate last of the Saxon kings—" *Hic jacet Harold Infelix!*" How fitly may we bid farewell to the brave Norman leader—falling on his field of honour—with that tribute to the generous and the valorous—"he did his duty." And in the field on which was consummated the ruin of the Saxon kingdom, he lay, himself a ruin.

We now pass on in the next chapter to another phase in the history of this terrible piece of silver; which runs through our story, with its adventures, as the TRUE HERO of it.





CHAPTER THE FOURTEENTH.

PICTURES FROM THE PORTFOLIO OF ADAM ROUGE-
DRAGON, HERALD TO KING ARTHUR, OF GLORIOUS
MEMORY.

*How one Jaculus, a Cornish Boy, did utterly destroy a
Terrible Giant. (A.D. 415.)*

THIS fantastic but beautiful tale, abounding in poetic imagery and illustrative of a further passage in the history of the mysterious **PIECE OF SILVER**, was furnished to the Author, years ago, by a young writer who had all the fancy and love of the intense and the new to constitute him—should he have persevered and should his literary stars have been fortunate—an author of acknowledged rank. His name was Edwyn Martyn—his birthplace was Newfoundland. His residence has been unknown to the Author for many years; who met him accidentally originally in London. His story is here presented in a dress only different, and only so far carefully elaborated as to secure the success it deserves. Some additions—with perhaps instances of farther art in the telling—are all that is concerned. All persons must unite, it is thought, in feeling the poetic taste, and enjoying the quaint, original manner—as well as the antiquarian tastefulness and intensity—with which this wild narrative is rendered. It is truly a beautiful fairy narrative—beautifully told; and it was supplied to give a scene in the long-continuing dramatic story of the Silver Piece.

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN King Ambrosius had for many years ruled over the Britons, he was gathered to his fathers; and in his stead reigned Gurlois, his son.

To him, in turn, succeeded Arthur—the most potent Knight and Star of Christian Chivalry; as all the records of him avow.

The Princess Gundreda, twin-sister to Gurlois, wedded Alexis, Knight of the Silver Bow.

Their issue, Loriscus, was united in the bonds of holy wedlock to the chaste Livia of Provence.

We shall now tell the story of some of this family.

And in their Castle of Pendennis was born in the Year of Grace 498—Radegunda.

It happened on a certain day in the summer, that this Ladye sat with her maidens in her bower in the castle-wall. And it also happened that nighhand to this Castle one Belus, a swineherd, weary from the heat, had stretched himself beneath in the shadow, and was fallen asleep. The Ladye, unconscious of the neighbourhood of any man, was amusing herself innocently in talking above on the battlements. Perched on her wrist, as she reclined idly over these battlements, was a favourite falcon. And with her maiden, Bertha, she laid this playful wager; while, because of the heat, she and Bertha disrobed themselves of all but their white *subligacula*:—

“If my falcon return empty from his flight, thou, Bertha, shall wed the first man who appears on the rock. An’ he bring back aught to his mistress, *she* sweareth that she weddeth him who thus accidentally cometh.”

To this, with great reluctance, stipulating for five minutes’ grace for the assumed *knicht* to appear, Bertha at last shyly assented. Arrow-like the bird shot through the warm summer air. Then, wheeling, it dived beneath the archway of the Barbacan, grazing smartly its plumes with the iron spikes of the lift port-

cullis. And then did it sportively pluck the tall red cap from over the upturned face of the sleeping herd. By which movement awakened, he would fain seize the robber. But thereby he appeared, with staring, silly, and with but half-awakened eyes, before the Ladye and her maiden, looking down from the castle-wall.

Like liege daughter of that noble house, ever true to its word, however rash, she took the cap and descended to the indignant owner. Unclasping her costly necklace she bound it about the cap. And then replacing it on his head, she kissed reverentially Belus the Herdsman. He shrank back astonished at the maiden's freedom: much more so that it came from so great a lady. But she placed her hand in his seriously and religiously, and bade him call her "his betrothed."

And true to her vow, while her maidens (who had come up) deemed that which had passed but a playful jest; while her attendants slumbered on their thick pillows of silk and gold tapestry, she crept from her chamber, next morning, to meet her strangely-chosen lord. The guards affrighted imagined that they saw the Holy Virgin speeding back into the country from some errand of mercy within the Castle. With the trembling Belus, who shamefacedly knew not how to approach her, the lady therefore departed. And before the Grey Hermit of Constenton she plighted her troth unto him for ever, and became his wife.

By sunset, far away from the castle of her Fathers, she reposed in the hut of her Spouse. Unto them, now wholly each to the other devoted, when time was duly fulfilled, was born a son. And him they called Jaculus; or "Jac" or "Jack."

In those days, terrible Giants infested this land of England. They devoured the best out of all the flocks and the herds. They, also, bore away and ate living young children. It happened that, one day when Jaculus was gathering some berries that he fancied upon the hills, and at times was shooting painted wooden arrows out of his bow so far up into the air that it was to the amazement of the herd-boy who companioned, as a sort of servant, with him—that he looked

low down into the valley; and Lo, he saw a man of mighty stature walking along and casting a shadow over the grass like that of a long cloud. This monstrous Figure of a Man was striding towards the boy's native distant village. He carried a huge sack on his back; and, to the horror of the boys, they saw him toss therein some of the sheep and cows, and one or two of the children playing in the grass path. Then with a club as big as the trunk of a leafless oak, he struck upon the roofs of the houses as he passed; which fell at one stroke like baby houses. Presently shouldering the sack again, and with a slouching clumsy gait, he went his way up the valley; darkening an opening between the cliffs that he passed through, and disappearing amongst the woods.

And at this sight Jaculus felt the blood of his fathers tingle in his body; so that he just swore by the beautiful sky, by the fields, by the grassy hills—and by the thunder which he sometimes, in the summer afternoons, heard rumbling from amidst them—that he would destroy the Giant and all of this cruel and intolerable giant brood. This same Giant lived up high in the rock called St. Michael's Rock (otherwise St. Michael's Mount); and he had six brothers in other parts of England, mightier than himself. He was wont to stride splashing through the sea for plunder of the flocks to the mainland. How Jaculus kept his oath, and did utterly destroy all these giants eventually, the pictures of Adam, Rouge Dragon Herald to King Arthur, do plainly show.

THIS IS THE FIRST PICTURE.

The letters indicate the *vignettes* or the part pictures into which the Magic Drift-Panorama (or this whole Picture) from time to time arrangeth itself. The whole being Glamour, or the enchanter's art.

A.

It is night—moonless, obscure. A veil of mist falls over the bright white face of the moon. The rain and sleet chase in floods each other angrily. The waves

glimmering in the dark like an army of angered elfins or miniature angels rush sparkling up the sand. The dim form of a mighty rock—ship-like—rests motionless on the waters. Black like a ship on the sea with its turrets and lines like the bosses and banks of oars of a great ship.

B.

A wood fire is blazing brightly. The smoke in dark wreaths curls up the wide gulf of a chimney. The walls of the hut are grimed and bronzed. On the settle the weary mother, grasping tight her baby and shuddering at every sound of the rolling wind without, sits lonely; while with eyes askance she glares to the roof, despairing of help against the Giants. Her hair is unbraided; her face is full of terror. At her feet a blood-hound lies stretched on the lustrous red-shining hearth. He stirs and snorts; for he dreams of attacking a Gaul: and he blows the fire with his breath.

C.

It is a mighty cave that openeth wide to the south. Within, a monster lamp of dully-gleaming brass flickereth, ruddy and awful. The cobweb-tapestried roof is alive and burning with flashing flies. Droppeth from one corner a tapping cascade of silver water-drops. Smokes emit and spout from fiery holes in the ochrey earthen floor. Deep-umbered in shadows riseth a Moloch-pile of bones and horns of beasts. Scattered about—remnants of ghastly Ogre festival—lie the severed limbs of children plump and fleshy. Lighted momentarily blue by the sulphur-flash from one of the fiery holes, is stuck upright the head of some all-royal ox, still glaring grand from out his filmed eyeballs. These eyes show as monster-opals in the fitful light. Strange jewellery in a giant's den of shaggy skins, and with the iron-sounding horn.

In a huge haven, as it were of rock, cast wide o'er hides, the terrible Cormoran, the Giant, is sleeping.

His snores roll away in thunder through the windings of the cave, and issue out over the sea like the snorts of a great beast. His hair—like torn ropes—hangs over his face, resembling a thick wood tangled after storms. His crimson tongue, as big as the sail of a boat, circleth over his chin :—the last as ebon black. His beard rolls over the cave, dyed with stains and flecks of bright-red blood. One mighty hand which quivereth sensitively in its supine strength grasps even yet—the plunder of the wood—as a tiny weed. This is a large draggled bush. Out of the grip of the other hand falls harmless betwixt his fingers and rests ponderous, his dreadful club. Like felled trees in the cleared forest lie long his legs ; and his sandals might be the harness of great horses.

D.

Higher yet hath the storm-sea foamed. The pearl-floods scale the russet sands. Burneth globous a *nebulus*, now and then, like a star in the widths of the pale mists. Made—Davidlike—out in the centre-line of its mighty rising disc, standeth a slender Boy in the middle of the moon. Now with both hands to his noble temples he presseth back his flowing hair and looketh like a young angel to heaven. And now the eddying water rippleth—gurgling about him—as his trampling feet stamp eager in the sea. For the boy Jack is actually going to storm the Stronghold of the Giant.

E.

During this night of storm a goodly ship, with its flat white sails and its gold beak—fashioned in the form of the Imperial Eagle—hath been contesting with the purple (the then Imperial purple) billows, dashed off at top into celestial silver. Men with bucklers and steel-gleaming Roman helmets toss wide their braceleted bare arms ; and they cry with shriek to the classic gods. This beaked ship is one of a Roman fleet bound up the Briton's Channel with standards, legionaries, and a Pro-

consul—the whole urging to the assistance of the Roman troops then camped in and occupying the woody eminences of Ancient Druid-Land or Oldest Britain.



“This beaked Ship is one of a Roman Fleet bound up the Briton's Channel with standards, legionaries, and a Proconsul.”

There hath been wreck, as was found next morning, amidst the grey spikes of rock speckling that plain of

dun sands at Marazion.* The ship with the Golden Eagle lies on her side battered and in ruin; with a huge wound in her flank from which welleteth, as from a scupper, a stream of shining coins, as if silver blood. The brown sands are silver-spangled with the money, and it lieth in heaps amidst the white eddies and the light green hissing runnels of the far-off sounding blue sea.

A monster-man—high as the steeple of a church—coming-on dark like a wonderful shadow upon the sunshiny sky, tramples over the rocks and splashes rudely amidst the whirlpools of the sea. He (savage-like) espieth the gilt wreck at a distance by its glittering; from a hold of his, amongst the hills up the country. And down he now cometh to rifle and to rend, and tear open the spoil—like an ugly Polypheme—with his huge hands. He thrusteth one hand up to the elbow in the bowels of the ship as into a human body, and he draweth forth a portion of the money; the which glittering stuff he understandeth not, but sifteth and droppeth curiously between forefinger and thumb like silver sand. And then he brusheth it forth like dust, from between his fingers. The Roman ship is silent of the hundreds which yesterday were carried in her—joyful at the sight of land and clattering their little short swords. The wild British waters were their grave. And—now that the tide is down—the Cornish Tablestones show as their pale green innumerable tombstones. The Giant Cormoran meanwhile trampleth brutish in the wet sands, and placeth his foot upon the bows of that great Roman ship; the body of which he cracketh like a walnut. At that moment he taketh in a hillock as it were, of wet sand, speckled with (to him) this silver money—dust in the ball of his *harnessed* foot:—for to the small sight of men his monster-sandal shows no less than as leather horse-harness, with brass bosses, big as the *umbos* of a gate. A pain, as if of a spear, ploughs up through his solid

* The sands of Marazion in Cornwall are not far from St. Michael's Mount, and are within twelve miles of the extremity of England in the westerly direction—the "Land's End" with its rocks, which are here extremely picturesque; as all travellers thereto know.

lumpy flesh into his prodigious thigh. He roars—dashes down his club; the spikes of which strike fire from the flags. And he runs inland with the dripping sand cleaving clammy and thick about his feet, kneaded as it is with money. One extraordinarily bright-shining little COIN, caught in his sandals, shooteth as it were darts of flame into the sole of his foot; which latter shakes the earth. Fatal PIECE of MONEY to the ship that carried it, as to the Monster Lout that upwards to his mountain-den bears it unconscious now in the



Company of Fays on their phantom-horses (assistant to Jaculus), skimming the marshes, in the last of twilight, on their inroad into the Giant's Hold.

mass of sand that clings like a ball in the hollow of his left foot. The curse is microscopical, but huge in effect because this monster is still in human form.

E.

A grassy place amidst the giant heads of the hills is now seen. The world sleeps save for the scream of the

ravening birds from the sullen sea and from the Roman wreck, wheeling blackly home. Broodeth Twilight. Swift as with the speed of the Ministers of Vengeance the champion-boy cuts up the clods. The mists are alive with shining helmeted phantoms, tearing like him the way, and onward rushing (to his flight) though he courseth like one alone; with the solitary country all around.

F.

Next yawneeth a pit of wonderful depth, the sides of which shone as lined with flame.

G.

It is morning—calm, and with the fresh winds blowing. In the East the sun is rising. Streaks of open bright light mingle with the gilded mists. Day is dropping the successive veils swift from her glorious face. Behind a rock by the still water the Boy sits watching like a young elfin. His hands support his chin. His full blue beautiful eyes look eastward as expectant. His yellow hair hangs flowing and smooth. Behind him the purple cliffs print boldly out upon the sky. An acre, bright and green, of the grass seems freshly cut. A pickaxe, a spade, a lantern, truly a “magic” one, and a horn (with slings of green) lie at the Boy’s feet.

H.

Smileth the bridegroom sun upon his beautiful blushing sea. The cloudy floors and the thunder-palaces of the deposed Night, and the elfin-films over them, begot of moon and water, sink, as in the theatre, in the leaden West. Now tears of joy (at rescue from storms) glitter thick and innumerable in the spearlike grass. And the cliffs, red with the flashing laughter of the Court of Morn, glow all-aspread in the resplendence of their beauty.

A monster human head, of the size at least of a shepherd’s hut, juts out of the ground. The eyes

glare horrible. The thick hair enwreaths. The mouth stretcheth death-like and agape; and the tiger-tongue rolls restless and slaughterous. Out of the broken skull the thick blood welleteth. It congealeth hard in the thicket of that starting black hair, and the gigantic grisly features convulse. A roar, like that of a death-smitten bull, resoundeth among the hills, and toppleth down a rock with the noise; which bounceth and splasheth away into the sea, dipping viciously amidst smoke and clangour and cataracts.

And now, somewhat aside, standeth the "Victor Boy." The Giant sinks. Vigorously to work setteth the pickaxe; making the earth fly, and gleaming red in the rushing light from out the pit. The quivering flames lick eager-like (here and there) as fiery tongues. Burneth now fierce that gulf of a grave. Like a cloud, or like rain, the grassy clods reiterate—falling in thickly. The alarmed seagulls spread wide their wings, spring high, and then poise to look and scream; but the vultures swoop swift, prying in closer and closer circles at that bleeding, enticing head. That head which rises as its own best black monument upon the stained hillock, and which glares horrible and half alive yet; as it seems.

THE SCROLL.

Herein, Reader, thou hast perceived how Jaculus, having come to the sands of Marazion, hath swum in the night, across the stormy water, to the Great Mount where Cormoran once did dwell. And there how that he dug a pit of wonderful depth Thou hast found; which straightway was set a-burning by the conjuration of one Minnistorides, a wizard, he bearing great hatred and horror at the dreadful Giant; and love of his country.

And this pit being cunningly contrived through stakes and straw and grass over the hole to deceive with nicety—Jaculus bloweth magically, when quite ready for the feat, on his silver-bound horn. At which obstreperous and dreadful noise, being taken

quite unexpectedly, Cormoran wakes in fury. And urging out with a dash to catch the insulting pigmy, in his haste the Giant FALLETH, unsuspecting, disgraced, and grievously, into the pit of fire. And thereupon he is speedily despatched by Jaculus. And this is the well-merited and perfect

END OF THE GIANT OF ST. MICHAEL'S MOUNT.

The COIN now disappears for a time. Where and what mischief it effected between this fantastic exercise of its power, and all the occurrences detailed in the preceding legendary account, and this coming scene in the Coliseum of Rome wherein (in this succeeding chapter) we again recognise it, mysterious and baleful, does not appear. It penetrates like an arrow through the clouds of the intervening centuries. And it is reckless—nay, unknowing—of the human stories into which it intrudes during that interval between its effects in Britain on the Cornish coast and its reappearance on the artificial sands of the Roman Coliseum.

We now thus pass on to another catastrophe it works amid the crowds of the city of the Seven Hills—the metropolis of the world—Rome.

For the generations perish like leaves; they come and go, rise and fall, succeed each other like waves, and are swept *flat*, as it were, by the passing winds of destiny; which cross the path of the marching generations, and, in extinguishing them, naturally take them along into that parade of misrepresented shadows upon the Wall of Time which is called History. But the COIN, itself, lives indestructible; for, like the “Wandering Jew,” it is doomed to survive all.





BOOK THE FIFTH.

PART THE FIRST.

THE CIRCUS MAXIMUS. TIME—A.D. 312.

WITH the lapse of centuries the ever-active SILVER PIECE reappears on its accustomed errand of mischief and of ruin. Traversing the world upon its mission, like the blight it fastens upon that prepared; and wreaks its ill according to its curse.

It is 312 of the Christian era. There is a procession to the Great *Coliseo*. All Rome stirred with the first daylight to witness an immolation of the unbelievers of the Gods. This is to take place in the centre of the sands of the huge amphitheatre. The time is that of one of the many cruel persecutions of the Christians. And on this day a young woman—a professor of the new proscribed creed—and her aged father are to be offered up sacrifice; the means of their destruction are to be the wild beasts of the arena.

The mighty city hums with its thronging thousands. The ways are choked. All the successive orders of the Roman dignities and the Roman people come forth with Imperial ensigns and in the pomp of silk and gold and with loud-sounding choral songs and trumpets. Hymns to the Pagan deities are grandly chanted by the priests as in slow procession *Virgilia*—for this is the name of the Christian maiden as *Maximus* is that of her father—as father and daughter are led bound between tall lictors with axes scarved with the colours of doom, and the crowd of standard-eagles and “hands” behind.

But there is one that precedes them—pale but reso-

lute—panoplied in full armour, with his greaves of steel and his crested helmet—displaying barbarian ensigns; this last. It is Demetrius, a young Dacian, taken in arms fighting nobly for the independence of his country, and condemned to a curious and cruel trial—doubtless death—as the result of love conceived by him for the Roman Virgilia by chance sights during their long imprisonment in the dungeons of the arbitrary, cruel Emperor. The magistrates have offered Maximin and his



The Great Coliseo

daughter their lives if a champion shall be found to fight for them; he to maintain horrid fight and to succeed with certain fierce lions of Africa to which they are to be exposed, bound and naked, in the arena. And Demetrius consents—in his great love—regardless altogether of his own life. For which, indeed, he has small hope in this so unequal combat, inadequately armed as he is.

And now the gorgeous procession sweeps into the *Coliseo* to the loud bursts of long trumpets and of

Imperial music. The *porta pompæ* vomits them forth into the gigantic ring. Huge billows of faces rising in sublime *gradus*, like clouds smaller and smaller, expand over the *sedilia*, the *sub-sellia*—those subdivisions of seats



“His brave, generous looks and his grand mien struck admiration, and won the applause of the entire assembly.”

which form collectively the *cavea* or grand hollow. These ascend from the *podium* at foot into populous terraces where the eye aches in its attempts to descry the *myriads* of half-lighted and seated people. The *Pulvinar*—the

station for the Emperor—glows thick with its Imperial gold:—it gleams with the thousands of shields of the Pretorians.

As the procession stately wound round the other side of the canal—twenty feet wide—called *Euripus*, contrived for the purpose, like a river between, of securing the safety of the spectators in those fierce games exhibited in this wondrous Circus (deadly these games in their progress and end), a hand, from beside the Emperor seemingly, flung forth a PIECE of SILVER as a dole or an *honorarium* to the combatant Demetrius. He bowed low as he saw it in the air, and seized it as an earnest of the wonderment he was exciting; dropping it gracefully within his helmet, which he took off for a moment for the purpose. His brave, generous looks and his grand mien struck admiration and won the applause of the entire assembly. A monstrous shower of money followed this first signal of admiration expressed by the COIN; which spontaneous flight of treasure the slaves gathered up in the shields and lay by, pending the issue of that wild-beast combat which was to decide for the lives of the gallant barbarian and of his two unhappy companions. Mysterious dispensation! The flight and fall of that PIECE of SILVER is Demetrius' very condemnation—his consecration to bitter doom. Unknown was the fatal hand from which it came. It fell and was picked up: Which act sufficed.

But now the attendants crowding upon the games retire on either side from the *spina* or low wall which runs down the centre of the amphitheatre. Some of the boldest slaves climb the *metae* or goals to witness intent the issue of the on-coming terrible battle between the man and the lions. Virgilia and her father are placed bound and nearly naked within reach of the starved lions at one side of the great central space of the terrible Circus. A loud-resounding flourish of music from metal mouths is given. The solitary armed man stands glittering small like a silver speck almost in the centre of the plain of death and waving bravely his bright little sword. The *porta libertinensis*, or of slaughter, is thrown wide open. And at the last signal, for which indeed

the keepers of the inner gates for a moment pause, out rush at a bound two monster-lions which have been tormented for days, and from which food has been long withheld for the very purpose of the barbaric excitement of this show. Rampant with rage and with flashing, fiery eyes they would dart first upon their more defenceless prey; avoiding the keen sword of the gladiator. But they are encountered, (standing between,) by the champion-warrior; who turning from one to the other in quick succession, deeply wounds them both. And now truly a fearful fight commences as the lions espying the bodies proffered to them behind Demetrius seek to tear him down ravenously in their frightful bounds to reach the Christian maiden and her screaming, writhing father; her father now crouches in the extremity of horror behind her, digging a frantic hole in the sands, with his hands, to hide him.

The valiant Demetrius is in a few moments almost hidden in a grapple by the lions, as he successfully for a time withstands them—his restless sword gleaming about their manes and throats like death-dealing lightning. The roar and yells and bounds and crushing of the furious beasts echo through the Amphitheatre; all the thousands in which are silent with terrific awe. At last the rolling thunder of a shout circling the *stadia*—a mighty shout that shakes almost all Rome—proclaims that one of the lions has fallen beneath the tremendous sword of the barbarian champion. But his armour is all blood-covered now and crushed as to steel coins in the contest; his sword breaks short in one last fierce stroke. He combats like a demi-god with the hilt; but he falls under the awful charge of the last of the devilish beasts. The show is stopped amidst noise like an earthquake. Men rush into the ring and surround with spears and despatch, after a fierce struggle, the surviving lion. The Emperor descends into the *arena*. Pardon is borne to the victims. But alas to one it is too late. Lifted by the Emperor's order and crowned with the glorious chaplet of conquest the victor-combatant has won two lives in that of his beloved Virgilia and that of her father; but—alas, alas!—he has lost *his own* in his triumph; for

his dead body is raised, this time on shields, and carried stiff out of the Coliseum.

Clouds roll over public events and private stories until we recover the fiery thread of our narrative, working backwards as we do, in the din of the Siege of Jerusalem.





PART THE SECOND.

THE FALL OF JERUSALEM. TIME—A.D. 70.

WE pass to another scene at a long interval in the history of the ever-reappearing PIECE of SILVER MONEY. We thus are nearing its sublime origin.

Jerusalem—the Holy City—is besieged. Each from his separate watchtower, Eleazar from the summit of the temple, John from the porticoes of the outer courts, and Simon from the heights of Sion, beheld three camps forming immediately under the walls of Jerusalem.

They harassed the Roman workmen by stones and missiles from the walls of the city, and by perpetual sallies. Under their penthouses of wicker-work the Romans laboured diligently; the Tenth Legion distinguished itself. The Jews set men to watch the huge rocks which came thundering down every now and then upon their heads. Titus ordered the innumerable battering-rams to play. At three different places they began clustering their thundering work. The besieged answered with shouts; but they were shouts of terror. The formidable, gigantic machines called *Helepoleis*, the “takers of cities,” pursued their furious battering. At length a corner tower came rolling down. There was one of these *Helepoleis*, or battering engines, called by the Jews themselves “Nico,” the Victorious, for it beat down everything grandly before it. “Nico” did not cease to thunder day and night. At dawn the battle always began again. Longinus, a Roman knight, greatly distinguished himself by charging singly into a whole squadron of the Jews; he killed two men and came safely off. Two monster walls had fallen; but still the precipitous heights of Sion, the impregnable

“Antonia,” and the stately Temple, lowered defiance on the invaders. The antiquary still endeavours to trace among the defaced and mouldering reliefs of the arch raised to Titus, “the Delight of Human-kind,” and which still stands in the Forum of Rome, the representation of the spoils taken from the temple of Jerusalem—the golden table and candlesticks, the censers, the silver trumpets, and even the long multitudinous procession of captive Jews.

The sacred gates were blocked up with rubbish, with balistas and catapults; the peaceful temple with its marble courts and gilded pinnacles assumed the appearance of a battered warlike citadel. Its courts were spotted and in some places strewn with the dead—men with swords broken or flashing, reeking with the blood of the enemy or of their own countrymen, rushed to and fro along the Holy place, and even trod into the Holy of Holies. Even the Roman soldiers, it is said, shuddered at the profanation of the Hebrew penetralia.

Titus, almost weary with conquest, determined to suspend the siege for a few days. He employed the time in making a magnificent review of all his troops, who were to receive their pay in bushel measures in view of the whole city. The troops defiled slowly in their grand attire with their arms advanced, all taken out of their cases, and their metal laps and breastplates on; the cavalry leading their horses, accoutred, shining in their most splendid trappings. The whole suburbs gleamed wide with steel, and gold and silver. The Romans beheld the spectacle with exulting pride, the Jews with consternation. The whole length of the old wall, the northern cloisters of the temple, every window, every roof was crowded with heads looking down, some with stern and scowling expression of hate and defiance; others in undisguised terror; some emaciated with famine, others heated with intemperance. For four days this procession continued defiling beneath the walls and never seemed done, for at night long trains of flambeaux and of lanterns circled the city. After seventeen days' labour, on the 27th or 29th of May, A.D. 70, the embankments were raised in

four separate places; that of the Fifth Legion began near the "Pool of the Sparrows;" that of the Twelfth about thirty-five feet farther off; that of the Tenth on the north near the pool of the "Almond Trees;" and that of the Fifteenth on the east, near the "Monument of John."

There was a deep and heavy silence over the whole city, broken only by the many robbers as they forced open houses to plunder the dead; on whom, if not quite expired, they would even try the edge of their swords.

A deserter who had at one time been appointed to pay for the interment of the dead at a particular gate, stated that from the 14th of April, when the siege began, to the 1st of July, 115,880 bodies had been buried at the public charge or "thrown from the walls," not including those interred by their friends. Others said that 600,000 of the poorer people had perished. A measure of wheat was selling for a talent, and the people were raking into the very ground for sustenance, scraping even for mould or dust or ashes if it was supposed to contain anything of edible refuse.

In the meantime the famine continued its fearful ravages. Men would fight, even the dearest friends would grapple each other, for the most miserable morsel. The most loathsome and disgusting food was sold and haggled for at an enormous price. The Jewish forces gnawed their belts, shoes, and even the leathern coats of their shields:—chopped hay, bark off the living tree, and shoots of trees sold at high prices.

"Food—food!—money to purchase it, or death! Kill me, and these two innocent babes who, with me, partake of this fearful vengeance of pitiless Heaven! Oh that the stones of these giant towers would fall and crush me! Oh, that I had never been born! Never had been reserved to see the misery of these two precious ones! Oh that I had never *lived* to witness the terrors of this foe-encompassed city; and the famine and destruction of its people thus by the Eternal Ruler abandoned! Jerusalem—city of my birth—city no longer mine nor of my people—but death's. City of destroyed regalities, of stricken lords of the priesthood and place of miraculous

history! Whose wail in that dread day that shall see thee sink into the gulf of final ruin shall be the loudest over thee? Whose grief and whose extremity shall surpass all these accumulated horrors within thy walls? Whose is to be that last shriek that shall the deepest compel into that dumb unpitied blue concave—withholding its lightnings—when the smoke of thy hugest sacrifice—*THYSELF*—shall rise in its utter fiery-tinged mass to the footsteps of the Throne of the immutable and sternly punishing Lord, who hath willed all this—wills it still?"

A woman was tossing her arms wildly in agony as these shrill cries escaped her. Worn and reduced into an object almost, itself, of personal horror to beholders, she yet challenged the extremest affright for herself—fear almost too great for pity—in her attitude as she lay with one almost dead child on the one side of her, and another just struggling for breath with its few items of life to cling to her long fingers; on the other. All three of this deplorable group of human-kind were sunk into a state that would have been the most heartrending in the world, had not callousness and utter indifference even to the most tremendous horrors possessed the whole city. Sense of self and of unutterable individual inflictions alone survived in Jerusalem now.

There was a very deep gateway which extended its arch of huge architectural stone over the wretched woman and her dying children. People had collected into this avenue; some to die, some to stab and plunder the living. Among the crowd were a number of soldiers who were tearing off their blood-bedabbled armour in their rage and hewing at the hinges in order to seek their wounds, and to relieve by oils or water the intolerable pain they were enduring. Disease and famine were elsewhere also doing their direful work. The incessant thundering of the battering-rams and the monotonous fall of stones and the cataract of rubbish in answer, with an occasional flicker in the sky as artificial false fires flew; these, with the subdulous, never-ceasing, rumbling flow of pounded marble and of fractured bricks out of the breaches, told of the activity of the

beleaguering army of Titus shouting now and then under the walls.

As the poor woman after a prolonged cry, which was only quieted by a sudden fierce blow from the blunt-end of a spear—this by a wounded soldier who *stood* (falling nearly to the earth) in the extremity of his hunger or pain, and whom the cry maddened; as the tortured woman, we say, shrank convulsively at the stroke, rocking herself on the now almost, indeed (from the battering engines), *shaking* pavements, a Jewish horseman of distinction (to judge from his armour and his trappings) would have dashed madly by this entrance of the arch had not his horse reared actually at the sight he sidelong encountered. An instant’s glance of the rider as his horse fell to his fore-feet again seemed to tell him the whole history of the woman. And ere he urged again on, he thrust his hand into the bosom of his robe and threw her a large piece of silver. It was the fateful **PIECE** which has so often played-out its mission in our pages. The very piece it was; but—How got it there?

Elisheba—for that was the name of this Jewish woman—caught the coin eagerly in her clutch. And she started to her feet as if there were new life intensifying then through her limbs and lifting her, at this so probably powerful means of melting the relentlessness of those who yet had “food” to give. Several near her saw the action of the pitying horseman and understood that gift. But either through compassion or more presumedly from the very dead despairing apathy and indifference which possessed everybody, no one sought to plunder her. With flashing eyes like a fury or a sibyl—guarded for everything—clasping the coin hard and seizing her children in her arms, like a maddened Niobe daring and challenging if possible yet further stroke, she cleared her way from out of the archway and through the famine-stricken, pestilence-falling crowd. And she made her path good through a whole street that bordered the battlemented wall, where, because of the falling wreck and the danger of shot from the Roman engines, the road was freer. She feared not

stone, shot, or arrow in that eager haste to avoid the something dreaded as yet more terrible.

She passes and comes along with rapidity to some distance. She espies a point or nook in the wall where a hungry group are devouring something. With a falcon eye she descries bread. With a laugh of joy she madly kisses now her almost dying little ones; she places them tenderly under the protection of a ledge of stone lining the lower rampart. And then she springs upward—*upward*—scales a shaking stair, mounting from stone to stone unto the topmost ridge of the wall, now all hot glare, and crashes, and dust; where the fierce arrows fly, lightning like, by her, and the thunder of the conflict resounds, shaking the very foundation of the city. “Money! money for a morsel of bread. It is for my little ones,” she shrieks, holding up the direful, mysterious COIN; unconscious in her tremblingly eager fingers. A soldier guarding a basket of bread snatches the coin; but with no intention of giving her any food. A colossal spearman, clutching the bread away at once from the grasp of the soldier and from the sight of the woman, deals both a dreadful blow. And Elisheba, tottering, falls backward over the edge of the rampart and becomes one more disregarded sacrifice of that groaning Jerusalem in the fiery hour of her bitterest trial. A cloud of smoke springs up vengefully from the chasm as if in answer to the woman’s fall. And the noise of the tumbling towers goes on incessantly as an underbeaten chorus to the more salient exciting louder tune of the hail of stones of the catapults, and the sharper shrieks which come in as the shrill notes.

“Let her go!” cried the rapacious soldier. “She is but one.” And the rain of missiles on the doomed city deepened. And the smokysky became fuller of stones; their crash being the awful music of the fall of Jerusalem.

Jerusalem fell—overwhelmed with horrors. And the tide of our story rolls back to its beginning, which was in the “Thirty-Third Year” of our present count of time. The year of the Crucifixion; upon which last phase we are now about fearfully to enter.



PART THE THIRD.

THE TEMPLE. TIME—A.D. 33.

MORN breaks slow over the hills of Jerusalem. Reluctant Night still clings to the heavens of which she—Dark Daughter—is soon to be dispossessed. The earth is still hushed in awe, as if in expectation of the most solemn of all sacrifices. All nature trembles. There is silence in heaven where the stars are hidden. And in the nether deeps, and in the uttermost parts thereof, and through the length and breadth of the Kingdoms of the Condemned, is there hushed awe, and are there the bowing-down of Crowned Authorities, the shattering of diadems, and the snapping of shadowy sceptres. For a Sign is in the Em-pyrean and a Word of awful power revolves with the rolling world. A Word inspiring UNIVERSAL FEAR AND TREMBLING.

And now there gleameth no sun-glance on the lead-coloured Saturnian towers of sin-possessed Jerusalem. The early morning is but as a lighter night. There are low sounds. The thronging and murmur of a multitude is heard as to a world-momentous act. And the gleaming of a long procession of armed men to a Gloomed Hill is distantly seen. Which Hill shall be a name throughout the flights of the centuries for evermore.

Two men meanwhile maintaining most perturbed discourse and occasionally casting glances at the dark alarming sky, were seen to take their way toiling with gasps upward towards the Great Temple—that Temple of Solomon whose countless pinnacles and embattled walls stretched grandly along the summit of the now darkened hill; but from which, when the refulgent sun of

Jerusalem shone, it showed all royally gold. The name of the one man was Eleasah, a just Jew, humble in spirit and pure in heart—wholly a man of innocent and of beneficent life; and the name of the other man—so alone known under this name to his companion—was Jansa, (Iansa, Iudas)—JUDAS.

And as they went on their way, the man Jansa was perpetually seen to strike his forehead as if in agony, and the clouds of the place of dole went as it were and came in his frightful, haggard, pain-channelled visage—to be shown alone in the penal lights. The other man was seeking apparently to calm and to administer words of comfort; and to be putting inquiries, to which the man Jansa would or could afford no reply. And as drops of water unto fierce flame were his expressions of pity and his proffered help to Jansa; extorting almost hisses of anguish.

A bag was in the hand of this so-called Jansa which he held with a clutch that brought tincture of blood into his palm. And ever and anon he would pause to groan as one in the worst extremity groans; and his perplexed distress to witness was most frightful.

And they now reached the Temple. In at the Gate of Shushan, through the Cloister or Porch of Solomon, through the Court of the Gentiles they went—the one man anxious, the other in despair. And they only paused because Jansa in alarm would not permit of the farther passing in with him to his companion Eleasah; as if, for some secret reasons, above all things, dreading it. They therefore abruptly turned round at the high rails and the flight of steps which lead up to the Chel or Terrace.

“Depart from me, for I am a man of sin; and I may not permit of living lower creatures—much less of a human being—to remain within sound of my voice! Aye, or even within sight of my body! Depart—while thou art spared to do it, and art not destroyed, with me, in the lightnings of Heaven. For even looking upon me is unlawful, and standing by my side is sin almost ineffaceable. Go, while the thunders yet pause!”

Ere Eleasah could recover from his astonishment, and

his horror at the perplexing disclosure, which he could see was real and no effect of sudden madness as which he was at first disposed to think it, he whom he had hitherto known as Jansa (and as only a merchant of his native Jerusalem) disappeared within the inclosures of the inner temple seemingly; for Eleasah saw no other means of withdrawal from his eye except into the Temple. Eleasah now heard the wail of trumpets, and the distant beat of the High Priest's timbrels or drums.

Eleasah gazed about him in terror and in dismay. For the times alarmed, and man scarcely knew or could trust his brother. The Court of Wine and Oil is on one side of Eleasah; the Court of Lepers on the other. He turns. There again are all familiar objects. On the right of him is the Wood Court, and on the left the Court of Nazarites. But he no longer sees Jansa. There is the Gate called Beautiful; there are the Court of the Women, the Gate of Nicanor, the Court of Israel, the vast brazen altar and the ascent to it; but Eleasah espieth not his late companion. And he fears much, for there is a horror upon him and a dread and forecast of an unspeakable evil of which in some manner he is to be made witness or partaker; or which it is his part to denounce to all Time and to fling forth from him in the face of heaven, of men, and of the possessors of the very rebel seats floored beneath the foundations of the world. The devils in their place of chains and punishing fire seemed doomed anew.

Meantime the man called Jansa made his way towards the Interior of the Temple. And he seeks the Chief Priests and Ruling Authorities of the Jews there assembled. He enters suddenly within the precincts. All within started to their feet astonished and appalled as they saw him come. For the ground quivered under him, as if trembling to denounce a man of guilt unutterable. And there was that upon his brow which told of a horror *not yet* complete; even though it struck aghast.

And before the council he opened the bag which he had carried in his tightly-compressed hand; and he brought into the profaned place money, and he shook out from his hand in the sight of all—aye, upon the

marbles that clanked and split to their awful fall as if to the crack of the world—Thirty Pieces of Silver. Those which had been a Price. There was almost a scream as the visage of Jansa disclosed.

“Thou art Judas the Traitor,” exclaimed one of the High Priests, shuddering and retreating. “Avaunt! Have we not paid thee?” And all hid their eyes in horror; turning pale.

Then Judas—for it was indeed Judas—struck his hands together in an agony that forced cries of pain even from those who witnessed it. And he groaned with a groan which came from the whole depths of his being, and in accents the most harrowing he said—“I am accursed in that guilty thing which I have done. For I have betrayed the Innocent, and Hell hath now all part in me. Earth rejecteth. And ah! no longer may I hope *for hope*. The celestial gates are closed and barricaded utterly against *me*—the abandoned both of men and angels! Take, then, this price which shall buy horrors, fruitfully, through the all-oncoming time—these for a rich harvest of TERROR.”

And in an ecstasy of despair, after trampling, as if in possession, upon the Silver Coin, Judas the traitor—rejected through the Universe!—turned from before them and departed like a shadow out of the sight of the Elders of the Temple; who now drew their breath and looked for the first time round.

But before he went they said unto him—making therein themselves partners of his unpronounceable sin—“What to us—Man—is that which thou hast done? See thou *thyself* to the ruin which thou hast called down upon thyself, body and soul; for we only paid thee, and we are free.”

And when Judas was gone from before them the Elders and the Chief Ones of the Temple took up these Silver Pieces and said unto each other—“By the Law are we not permitted to return these Coins back into the Treasury of the Temple, because therewith hath life been paid for. Let us devise therefore that which we shall do with the pieces; so that there be no blood on our souls.”

And a space of land was purchased with the Accursed Pieces, whereinto the bodies of strangers were committed in burial. And it beareth the name of the Field of Blood unto this day.

But awaiting the return of the supposed Jansa, Eleasah remained without the boundary of the Courts of the Temple. And men came forth of the Temple, exclaiming upon Judas—"This is Judas the Traitor. Devils shall possess him utterly! This is Judas!"

And Judas covered his face with his hands, and writhed in the terror of his unutterable remorse. And when he saw Eleasah he flung himself at his feet, as if seeking to extort pardon to be yielded to the *extremity* of his anguish. But Eleasah turned from him in horror and pushed him away; and with raised and trembling hands he denounced him, through the oncoming Time, as the mighty mark, and the terrible name at which the worlds were to shudder. To be cast out of hope in either Place Present or Place to Come; a leaf out of the Book of Life to be burnt.

And in an uncontrollable inspiration, and in a holy horror at the malefactor, he cried—"The Silver Pieces, the price of that thine all-nameless guilt, shall wander on, as lights of hell, through the centuries. And as living curses, fastening upon hopes and upon life, shall they crush and consume—trample and annihilate! Those into whose hands they fall shall by varying plagues—ingenious in their change, yet alike fell and total—be followed and destroyed! And in holding them, even for an instant (in one or other shape) shall they find dole and doom. Undecaying—imperishable, shall they blend the phases of all nature into their purpose—masters (as devils) of it! And they shall live undestroyed through Time as things exempt, upon which no hand to hide or to change, through the ages, shall fall. But they shall be as magic things that pass, unwitting of it, through Time! As Fires upon the green world shall they fall—wasting, burning, blasting. Money of Hades, that shall buy to the Devil, and wholly over to misfortune, those alike hapless or happy—unconscious both. They shall

tempt, in their glare and glamour, as nets or clouds of gold (the handiwork of the servants of Sathan), binding and fastening (as in the false-seeming web or mist of jewels) the Wicked. But with mere physical ill and mere temporary evil hap shall the Good break through their floating spells, fighting against their bad power in the strength of the angel-helped will, and rescued by the springing soul. Shaken free of them, shall men walk freer—godlier. But held, or hugged, or taken as ‘loved’ to the bosom—though all unseen their origin—shall they bring tumult, shall they bring terror, shall they bring destruction! Banned through the rolling worlds, and passing as Charmed Signs through the Time to Be. Thus shall they sweep as fiery letters through the centuries, to be read alone of those magicians who gather into meaning the red-hot inscriptions on the Gates of Hell! And may Men take warning! As for thee—Child of the Evil One—thou art *worse* than the devils, for thou sold’st thyself for utter ashes, and for veriest dust! Thyself killing and consuming—foul magician!—the once-blessed soul within thee! Thine is the inexpressible guilt! Away! Get thee to Darkness! If Darkness shall not Itself again vomit thee out! Get thee then to an Orcus which shall grow the hotter—the whiter in fiercer light—that THOU art in it!”

And Eleasah turned, and went on his way in terror and in grief; weeping bitter tears. And darkness fell on the soul of Judas. Darkness not to be told. Darkness darker than the starless night. The darkness of the “eternal hopeless!” The darkness never to know—even in the flight of the (to others) pitying eternal time—a glance of the rescuing light!

(Such is the dole of the Seller of His SAVIOUR through the worlds to come. And as just and merited, so does the world admit the fearful—the unutterable doom. Recited, however, to modern inattentive—languid, doubting, misunderstanding, ignorant ears in the miraculous pages of the “Sacred Story.”)

Ah sad—sad :

‘Ah foolish—foolish !

Modern men, and these ignorantly educated latter times in which the poor creature, MAN, and his contemptible, physical, vain-glorious, mechanical discoveries are assumed as paramount, and of undeniable because of immediate and practical value to everyday life, may be assured that instead of misrepresentation and mere dogma and mere symbolical, dialectical, convenient, and merely necessary and expedient and requisite teaching (as which modern science and modern doubt contends successfully that it is), that the Gospel is TRUE and not philosophical only, and that the eternal mission of the SAVIOUR and the miraculous narrative of HIS LIFE ON EARTH are at once real, and vital, and exact; though not perhaps meant in the senses which are involved when reason sets in to examine:—for men, through reason, will never find out the things of God.





BOOK THE SIXTH AND FINAL.

A DREAM OF ETERNITY.

AND the long days, after these mighty events, passed. And Eleasah, the Just Man, was sorely troubled in mind; seeking the good and yet beset with doubt, trouble, and anxieties as to Man and his Final Destiny. He, Eleasah, this Jew, humble in heart and soliciting out of the revelations of nature comfort in those days of terror and affliction—he, this man of thought and of sorrow, went wandering about in the neighbourhood of Jerusalem. And he haunted its steeps inconsolably to witness the setting of the sun as promising again of rising; and of its reappearance into the heaven of life indicative of man's birth into the better state. And the contradictory scheme of nature he was endeavouring to reconcile to his despairing understanding, and upon the power and intents of Providence he was dwelling ceaselessly, and into the great love of Goodness and of purity was he growing daily. And he feared—feared exceedingly—for “fear is the beginning of wisdom.”

Then when he gazed upon the stars he said to himself—“If it were but permitted to this mean condition—to *me* as a single Son of Earth—to transcend these low bounds of my being, and to be allowed—though but for a moment—to witness in the truth the ever-

more wider-stretching splendours of the dwelling-place of that adorable and eternal UNKNOWN POWER who has hung the stars as lights in the impenetrable profound. But, ah, to man so DISTANT. Methinks the meanest of the angels—for there must be *some eyes to see* when this human frame falls into atoms—must own felicity, must possess bliss in being witness of the fathomless wonder of that glorious open space; seeing the procession of worlds and partaking of the infinite happiness which makes the grandest music in their ceaseless rolling! Oh that I may at last win to those distant places of the blessed! And that I may one day join in the universal sense of life which proclaims praise in its harmonious thunder through the infinite concave, in a *personal identity* that may see and understand; as I do now.”

And on the slope of one of the mountains round Jerusalem, and amidst the glories of an afternoon that was altogether flooded with sun, and that breathed the airs of the bright lost Paradise (aye, that very angels' land) did Eleasah, wearied with his languishing thoughts and after a day of long wandering and holy meditation, fall asleep quietly with his folded submissive hands. And he dreamt the following pictures; which were as if TOLD him:—

It was as the lower steps this dream—ascending into light—of the same celestial ladder, up which the Patriarch Jacob saw the angelic squadrons passing up within, and lost at last, in glory, in the Heavenly Gates.

“Dream-vision of the Infinite as it reveals itself in the Chambers of Space.

God called up from dreams a man into the vestibule of heaven, saying, ‘Come thou hither, and see the glory of my house.’ And to the servants that stood around his throne he said, ‘Take him, and *undress him from his robes of flesh*: change his vision, and put a new breath into his nostrils: arm him with sail-broad wings for flight. Only touch not with any change his human heart—the heart that weeps and trembles.’

It was done; and with a mighty angel for his guide, the man stood ready for his infinite voyage; and from the terraces of heaven, without sound or farewell, at once they wheeled away into endless space. Sometimes with the solemn flight of angel-wing they fled through Zaaarahs of darkness, through wildernesses of death that divided the worlds of life: sometimes they swept over frontiers, that were quickening under prophetic motions towards a life not yet realised. Then from a distance that is counted only in heaven, light dawned for a time through a sleepy film: by unutterable pace the light swept to *them*, they by unutterable pace to the light: in a moment the rushing of planets was upon them: in a moment the blazing of suns was around them. Then came eternities of twilight, that revealed, but were not revealed. To the right hand and to the left towered mighty constellations, that by self-repetitions and by answers from afar, that by counter-positions, that by mysterious combinations, built up triumphal gates, whose architraves, whose archways—horizontal, upright—rested—rose—at altitudes, by spans—that seemed ghostly from infinitude. Without measure were the architraves, past number were the archways, beyond memory the gates. Within were stairs that scaled the eternities above, that descended to the eternities below: above was below, below was above, to the man stripped of gravitating body: depth was swallowed-up in height insurmountable, height was swallowed-up in depth unfathomable.

Suddenly as thus they rode from infinite to infinite, suddenly as thus they tilted over abysmal worlds, a mighty cry arose—that systems more mysterious, worlds more billowy—other heights, and other depths—were dawning, were nearing, were at hand.

Then the man sighed, stopped, shuddered, and wept. His overladen heart uttered itself in tears; and he said, 'Angel, I will go no farther. For the spirit of man aches under this infinity. Insufferable is the glory of God's house. Let me lie down in the grave, that I may find rest from the persecutions of the Infinite; for end, I see, there is none.' And from all the listening

stars that shone around issued one choral chant—
'Even so it is, Angel, thou knowest that it is: end
there is none, that ever yet we heard of.' 'End is
there none?' the angel solemnly demanded. 'And is
this the sorrow that kills you?' But no voice
answered, that he might answer himself. Then the
angel threw up his glorious hands to the heaven of
heavens, saying, 'End is there none to this universe
of God? Lo! also THERE IS NO BEGINNING.'"



"Make His paths strait.

END OF THE STORY OF THE SILVER PIECE.



EPILOGUE CONCERNING THE STRANGE MAN'S MANUSCRIPT.

THE Author of the Whole begs to assert, with all proper apologies, that this book is an ambitious attempt, doubtless, to produce a history as original as the far-famed "Shadowless Man" of the renowned Adelbert von Chamisso—that incomparable story, as it has been called—the most singular and new of modern times; and which dwells in every one's mind.

But newness and strangeness take a long time before they are understood and appreciated. The first edition of "Peter Schlemihl" appeared in 1814, with a dedication dated May 27, 1813. It was long before it could find a publisher; and when it was produced, it was published by a friend. It has been (in the account of it) suggestively added:—"It was just beginning to be known in the world in 1815, when the author left Germany on a voyage round the world." Truly "round the world," but never "in it"—like an author.

Now, if it be the lot of this, my work, for a considerable time to burrow, in darkness, its way to publicity, it shall be, at least, matter for consolation that it had ample opportunity, in its entombment, for revision; and that it suffered in good company. Not to evoke presumptuous comparisons, or to institute likeness between that charming story and my wild account, I may remind

those who know that the manuscript of the "Vicar of Wakefield" (to use the historical words recording the circumstance) lay "curled up in dust and neglect" for two years in a by-drawer of the publisher Newbery, after it had been bought at the importunity *even of Dr. Johnson*, who, moreover, himself confesses that he privately "*did not expect much of it,*" for a most meagre sum. Poor De Foe walked all over London, and when he was "tired," his wife "walked also"—London, to his and her comfort, not being then quite so large as it is now—in the vain attempt to find a bookseller (for they were not called "publishers" in those days), to bring out his immortal "Robinson Crusoe;" and Chamisso was long finding a publisher, though the harvest is now literally of a world's growth; and the ears golden.

My story must be considered as, if upon a moral, still upon a very daring theme. "Hero," if I have one, it is no "living one." The time of my narrative embraces no less long a period than that of the Eighteen Centuries of Christianity; which is a bold experiment in adventures. The history runs through the entire Christian era, in fact. I confess the risk and boldness of my plan, while I reiterate its excellent moral, and the goodness of my intentions, though I am he who declare them as such. Through the various sections of my story, and ever reappearing, working as the unsuspected (and therefore true) "devil" through the fair humanities, passes the literal and real "Hero" of it—*A piece of silver*—"ONE" of the accursed "THIRTY"—the "Price of HIM that was valued!" My deduction, if the world will insist on a deduction, is the native clinging curse which rests upon money as mere money; and the proofs that the undue greed of it—a conspicuous vice of our time, as all allow—by a never-failing and immortal law, brings its own ruin—its own terrible retribution in the long run; and its devil's penalties and fire.

And I trust that I have everywhere treated the subject with the religious respect which it severely demanded. And further, especially in the closing scenes, which terrible scenes were the most difficult to manage, I have sought to be scrupulous. I have been

very careful, and I am still diffident, over my last chapters, which necessitated the utmost caution—not to offend prejudice. In conclusion, I may confidently assert that the direction-points which I have set myself to steer-by are the best, however I may have fallen short of the exceedingly great objects I had in view, and of the ideal at which I strove; that is, adequately to realise the unwelcome notion of branding money with all evil; which is remarkable as a protest in so wealth-desiring and so money-making an age. I think that a sufficient succession of *excitements* (at least) to the reader are to be obtained out of the events in my chapters. And I would maintain, respectfully, that excitement—only in the good sense—is, after all, the greatest teacher. And it must be so for this natural reason, that unless a truth is, somehow, forced upon attention, there is no chance, in the hurry and incessant tyrannous demands of the world, that it should gain notice. Readers are only taught by force, as it were. They are gained only by that in which they are interested; and all readers are interested by that which appeals the most forcibly and picturesquely to their imagination. Now, upon the imagination of my readers I have most largely drawn—supremely so in this story; though I am not afraid of obtaining my object if my readers will only give me their attention. For without this latter all our efforts as authors are vain; for we must not have our reader with one eye on the book and the other looking out of window.



THE EDITOR'S OWN PRIVATE ACCOUNT
OF
HOW HE BECAME POSSESSED
OF
THE MANUSCRIPT OF THE HISTORY OF
"ONE OF THE THIRTY."

“JEW, WANDERING. See SAINT GERMAIN.”

“SAINT GERMAIN, COUNT DE.—A singular character, some way connected with the ‘*Illuminati*’ (supposed *Rosicrucians*), of last century, and equally remarkable for the extent of his knowledge, the apparent boundlessness of his wealth (displayed magnificently for a time), and his mysterious connection with the French Court—especially with Louis the Fifteenth and Madame de Pompadour. HE IS SAID to have died at Schleswick in 1784. The curious should compare with his pretensions the Traditions of the ‘WANDERING JEW,’ which are collected together in the ‘Chronicles of Cartophilus;’ so called—lately published by David Hoffman.”—*Dict. Biog.*



THE EDITOR'S ACCOUNT OF "ONE OF THE THIRTY."

SHALL I be accused of absurdity—of wilful misrepresentation—of a mere desire to secure dramatic effect—or of making, in self-delusion, some prodigious mistake, when I assert my belief that I have, really and truly, MET the singular supposedly mythic personage, glanced-at on the opposite page—the “Wandering Jew”?

I know this assertion seems preposterous.

But I will proceed with this little preliminary personal narrative, which is strictly true; and which I proposed to my Publisher—as he well knows—to verify by a declaration made actually and openly, “according to law,”* by affidavit before the competent authority if necessary; and which—further—eventually I will perhaps really do; and so place these circumstances beyond doubt or cavil; for full satisfaction.

I was always a strange, moody, unaccountable child; fond of solitude—drawing all my mental nutriment from reading—setting with indomitable perseverance to

* “Statutory Declaration;” before a Magistrate.

the perusal of every book which fell in my way; and studying and restudying my favourite authors with loving pertinacity. I grew very superstitious, contemplative, and fanciful. The faculty of "marvellousness" was largely developed in me very early. I read works of imagination with avidity. The town became filled to me with phantom romance-pictures. I led a life quite out of my real life. As time advanced with me, poetry and romance, also, *pari passu*, kept pace with my historical studies.

However, it was not until later times—and at an age when I was, from the innocence of a child, confirmed in the ways (shall I say in the wickedness?) of the town, that I began to speculate; truly upon strange things. I was always excessively interested in the mighty mysteries of the Story of the Crucifixion. The "Divine Drama" had brought a new sun to the wearied world: facts in which there lay the Only Hope of Humanity. I used to cry (when I was a little child) as I read the pathetic narrative of the sufferings, and the final sacrifice of that adorable BEING. His sayings to "the poor"—and about "the poor"—touched me. I, as a child, belonged to a family which was *not poor*, though certainly it was not overwhelmingly rich; but I was "poor in spirit." And I felt that I should be thus poor through a lifetime; which premonition my succeeding life has maintained as truth (for me), until now.

I was very fond of the Scriptures—particularly of the New Testament. I have still in my ears the bells of St. James's Church, Piccadilly; summoning to service on a sunshiny Sunday morning. I was very little at that time. I longed to go to church. There is a narrow passage from Piccadilly into Jermyn Street towards St. James's Square, where, by the side of my mother (a good, truly religious, then very young woman), I trotted to church; carrying the large prayer-book. The dull sound of the church bell seemed to pass high overhead as we walked affectionately between the houses, down this defile, under the great west-window, flanked by Sir Christopher Wren's Corinthian pilasters; at which, and at certain "ovals" of stone-mouldings I

was mysteriously awed—as at gigantic Taurine, or stone Cyclopean Bull's-Eyes—the dreaming fear of a very sensitive, precocious child; for I was then only five years old. I remember the stone cherubs and their carved puffed-out cheeks. I recall the communion-rails at which I knelt; and the deprecating, exciting flutter of my little nervous heart as the voluminous snowy surplice of the officiating clergyman at the altar swept stately by me—almost touching. If one of those mighty mysterious beings the celebrants had paused and looked at me—or—distinction more insupportable—if one had looked-down and benignantly spoken a word—it would have been (let me say it reverently) almost as if God Himself had then spoken. I was a sort of little imitation Samuel. Ah, true unutterable instinct of the child's heart—to whom that House of Prayer is indeed “God's House;” and to whom the congregation assembled is as the hushed COURT of a KING.

Apart from this, it was not until later times—and at a very confirmed age in all sorts of interests and of knowledge, bad and good—that I began to speculate—amidst my many other pursuits and antiquarian and theosophical objects of inquiry; also, if possible, trying at settlement—whether there was not a possibility of a recovery—or a sight—or an historical identification reliable—of “One” of the Thirty Pieces of Silver; for which Judas (the TRAITOR JUDAS) betrayed the BENEFACTOR of the WORLD, the “SALVATOR MUNDI.” The curiousness of looking—nay, of handling—such a momentous, true item; then really to be seen by the eyes, and to be felt—just as we might be feeling a crown-piece—for that size was (as it has been proven) the size of these inexpressibly portentous pieces of silver: why, this thought, this certainty of really beholding one of these *precious*—one of these AWFUL pieces, struck me as if the whole of London (if I saw it then) would be round me in the instant *as in a dream*; as in the dream (as in the real world—this other waking world becoming the UNREAL WORLD) in which I was last night—or rather this morning: for REAL

DREAMING (you know it, now, attentive reader), only sets in *after midnight*; when the Great Good Spirits have power.

The circumstances, in brief, of my having seen One of the Thirty Pieces of Silver—FOR I HAVE SEEN “ONE”—are simply these: In the year 1854 my place of residence was Harewood Square, Regent’s Park, London, N.W. It was the advanced spring time; or rather it was the first month of summer—namely, it was June. And in the afternoon between three and four o’clock, after witnessing, as I came across Hyde Park, an eclipse of the sun, which was seen with great distinctness and satisfaction on this clear, sunshiny, hot afternoon in town—and which most London people will remember—I was walking eastwards, and came through Upper and Lower Grosvenor Street, and into Maddox Street. I was unoccupied as far as any particular business-purpose was concerned. At a jeweller’s shop, of miscellaneous, foreign character, I saw—seemingly shrinking into a corner—wafted into the place, as it were, by mere accident—a dusty, small label or paper, on which was the following:—

“SHEKEL of the TEMPLE; identified as probably the original of One of the Thirty. Those ‘Pieces of Silver’ for which Our Lord was sold.”

I beg the reader to understand that these are real facts that I am narrating.

I believe I pored over this piece of paper for fifteen or twenty minutes. And then I entered the shop; and half-ashamed of myself (for the curious, seemingly wild, subsequent inquiry), I asked where the piece of paper—with such a reference—had come from? The person in the shop did not know at first even of there being such a paper in his window. But he at last found it, and brought it out; and he showed me, on the back of it, I believe, a reference to a “Mr. Böhrer,” dealing in curiosities ancient and modern. These were principally Swiss and German *knick-knacks* and odds and ends, and certain specimens of modern out-of-the-way art. Mr. Böhrer lived at a certain number (300 and something, if I remember rightly) on Holborn Hill.

As I was going eastward, and had time—and was moreover very curious after this coin—I determined to walk to Holborn Hill, and to examine and test this question of the Piece of Silver for myself. I found the shop of Mr. Böhrer on the north side of Snow Hill, between Giltspur Street and St. Sepulchre's Church, and I entered the house. I saw only a young woman attending in the shop; which shop was large, though plain and informal. The shop was old-fashioned, though certainly not cumbered-up with antiquities. Its arrangements—notwithstanding that they were quaint and unlikely for that part of the miscellaneous world of commercial London—were modern. Seeing that I had entered to inquire for such an unusual and unbelieved-in item in the great waste of the drift of the world as one of the occult pieces of that awful "Silver Thirty" (upon which it was assumed, speculatively, that the destiny of mankind has turned), and inasfar as I asked for this wonder amidst the commonplace rattle of the traffic of Holborn Hill, where I thus far had come, drawing-in under the shadow of St. Paul's; and even although from the shop-window I could descry the gilt Cross of St. Paul's itself, high elevated in the sunshine in the air—I stood at first perplexed and irresolute. I was diffident about asking questions of this young woman—fearing her misconstruction of me as at least an enthusiast—possibly a lunatic. But she seemed to divine—women are so quick in their generally accurate conceptions—that she had a sort of philosophic, enthusiastic (therefore irrepressible) old-modern antiquary before her. And consequently she went into the back parlour, and brought out a very respectable, staid-looking old German, who put me in mind of some of the Lutheran pastors of Swiss Communes or of North German parishes whom I had seen. I soon fell into discourse with this elderly gentleman. He was serene-looking and good-natured—impressing a stranger as an innocent, conscientious, serious kind of German shopkeeper. He was dressed in respectable black, as if he had recently sustained that sort of domestic trouble ("home trouble") which is touchingly marked.

Very soon—and at a pause which was a favourable point for it, in our self-possessed, candidly-interchanging conversation—he asked me into his back parlour; which soon proved to be the repository, *adytum*, or the *penetralia* in which I was to achieve to that wonder—the acquisition concerning which I so anxiously sought. When I made hesitating, submissive reference to the Silver Shekel supposed to be a *fac-simile*, or indeed One itself, of the “Thirty Pieces of Silver,” he with much openness of manner and even with friendly sincerity, satisfied me that it was not for sale—that it never could be for sale. He implied that he would judge it unfortunate if at any time the owner (for he told me *he* was not the owner) should part with it;—nay, even yield it upon *any* inducement. He said that he had no objection to show it to me; though this was a favour. But those—thus far honoured in seeing it—must be the proper persons; seriously (upon religious grounds) desirous of examining such a wonder—and persons of respectable, and of *respected*, disposition and manners.

This innocence and calm seriousness—so unlike the fuss, subservience and boasts of usual business men—pleased me. I spent three-quarters-of-an-hour talking with great pleasure with this old German gentleman—for he was infinitely more this in his manners than impressing as a shopkeeper. He was out of place as this latter—especially on Snow Hill; which seemed to have nothing to do with either him or his shop.

In my short, but uninterrupted interview I learned even much of this respectable man’s private history. I inquired, as he was evidently an experienced and an instructed collector of curiosities, whether he really believed there was a possibility, not only of the ONE he exhibited being genuine—but (further) whether there was any likelihood of there being in existence one of the “Thirty Pieces of Silver”—Judas’s real silver pieces. He told me he saw no reason to assume absolutely the contrary. That irrespectively of the miracle, the distance of time was no bar; because coins of very many previous much more remote ages—indeed far-up and even to a scarcely believable epoch—were

every day being discovered and coming into the hands of the curious; that he himself had had many such—undoubtedly genuine coins. He spoke very sensibly and coolly—and perfectly without design, and with much honest, even with religious simplicity of manner and with knowledge.

“In some respects it is an awful thing to speak about,” said he, “because the best evidence assures us that the Crucifixion *did really take place*; and that in the manner related in the Gospels. As for myself, I always did believe it, and I shall continue to believe it. In regard of the question of the survival into our own day—mad and wild as it may seem, but as it only *seems*—it is a wonder which disappears on comparison, and on close, candid examination. As to this important point, first, whether there is existent any one of the ‘Thirty,’ and next whether this which I have shown you, and which belongs to me and to my family, be ‘ONE’—why I must leave that conclusion to your own sagacity. But I do not see—taking the fact by itself—any impossibility, or incongruity, in the idea. Such a piece of money may very possibly have survived down to this very day. Old coins—ininitely more ancient—of the Babylonian, Egyptian, and some of the unbelievably earliest—still strictly historical periods—are extant, and contemporaneous with us in public sight; and they are common objects to be met with, and are to be purchased. All the Museums show this. As to the history of the particular piece of silver—a ‘Shekel of the Temple,’ which particular coin is known to be that for which Our Saviour was sold—and mine as you will see is wonderfully old, worn-down, and corroded—the tradition as to the authenticity of it has survived in my family, with direct lineal assurances of truth for nearly three centuries. With respect to the accounts of this piece in my possession, I assure you that they—independently of me—are fully reliable, and are guaranteed sufficiently. *I* may doubt—you may doubt—every one may doubt (as indeed we may doubt of everything); but such are the facts. And bad and base indeed must any one be to misrepresent in

such a case —carrying imposition upon the most sacred things.

“I will show you this Silver Piece of Money,” Mr. Böhrer went on, “which with this tremendous character (think as we may, and reject as *you* may) has passed down as an heirloom to my Uncle from his (and my) predecessors; who have all avouched, in writing and otherwise, its genuineness. And it has always been represented in my family as (however obtained) One of the True Pieces of Silver for which OUR LORD was sold.”

My heart really fluttered, and my eyes set hard in expectation. Mr. Böhrer produced this prodigy from a small drawer in an old cabinet lumbered-up in a corner of his back-parlour; which was light enough. The murmur of Snow Hill and the distant shuffle of the passers-by, with the rumble of the omnibuses—even the slant of sun which came into the back-parlour from a side-window—seemed very strange. I stood, fixed with anxiety. Then Mr. Böhrer came tranquilly across the carpetless floor to me, and he seemed sad; looking at me all the time as if he were not holding in his hand the greatest treasure of the whole world. For he had the object in his palm—which was evidently not a coin, but a case—a morocco-case. But what was not *in* that case?

Out of this dark maroon morocco-case, and nestling as in a jewel-case for a reliquary on a heaped pillow of cotton on rich violet silk, lay — when Mr. Böhrer touched the starting steel spring—an old—*old*—OLD Coin of the size of a crown-piece; dusk—nay, dark. Dark, even black as with the occult clouds of the wonders of eighteen centuries—yet hiding deep-down in its centre the intolerable possible spark of an immortal magic fire. This was my thought as I gazed; for I really gazed on this slumbrous disc of magician’s old iron (as it looked), marked cabalistically with scarcely recognisable Hebrew letters and marks; and the master (as a charm) of thunders.

And all this was really and truly on Snow Hill, in London, in Mr. Böhrer’s shop, which shop everybody

may remember, and which will be found in the London Directory of the date—namely, in the month of June, 1854, for it was on that month, and in that year that I was there—really was there. Though the house is now down.

Post-offices cannot make wilful mistakes. These are all real facts which I am relating, and I shall sign my name at the end of this, to show how—and in what manner—this truly “STRANGE STORY” came into my hands—and from what exceedingly mysterious person I did (really) derive it: derive it as a trust—with an injunction, if the times were appropriate and proper for its appearance, to put it before the world. And that the times are fit for it, I think the period in which we live (anno 1873) will, with its daredevil characteristics—dangerous ones; threatening ones; fast ones; evil ones—abundantly—let me not say more than abundantly!—prove.

I was allowed to take this famous reputed “One” of the “Thirty” out of its case. I handled it. I felt it in my hand. I looked at it before and behind; and I was free to place it (and to replace it) in its magnificent morocco-case, made evidently with immense care. This case had simply a four-square, or Maltese, small gold cross stamped upon it, very neatly executed.

I will give only an outline of my doings in this account. I must make that which might grow here into a long story—short. I have to tell how this manuscript came into my hand—which the reader now perceives as a book, and which I have carefully edited and prepared for publication—under the jealous eyes of my Publisher, who loves good books and curious books, and who has insisted (with my freest good-will) on my justification of my reasons for concluding that I am writing a veritable account—an *historical* account—of the adventures of “One” of the real “Thirty Pieces of Silver.”

Acquaintance (commenced in this way) passed up into respect and friendship for this Mr. Böhrer. I am sure I cannot tell whether he is now living. His old shop, and all the adjacent houses, have been swept

away before the improving hands of the people of the Metropolitan and Underground Railway, and of its Ludgate Hill "Extension." Mr. Böhler may be living, either in England, or elsewhere. And if he be alive he will soon see and recognise this true account of himself, and this averment of his dealings with me. And in that case he can—if he pleases—bear willing and exact witness as to the truth of my story. Which I am sure he will, if the fact of my publication of his relative's papers reach him—and he see this Book anywhere.

After a time, and not until our intercourse had become friendly, I discovered that the Silver Shekel which he had displayed to me, and which—for obvious reasons (believing as he did)—he guarded with a certain sort of, even, *sad* superstitious, fearing care—was the property—and privately the boast—of an old strange Uncle. This was a man of very singular character. I had heard of him years before. He was known as occupying—for he was an indomitable student—a certain seat continuously* in the Reading-Room of the British Museum. Very many readers and frequenters of that citadel of learning,—though it may be remarked, *en passant*, that the men of the most prodigious acquirements, and of the most remarkable depth of erudition are very rarely to be seen there—the "man of few books" being the man of "mind,"—many readers in the Museum Library will recall this person. He looked not of this world—*though he strove to look like it*. He was reverend-looking—though he had flighty manners sometimes. He was absent and forgetful—and yet he rallied *with an intensity of obviousness*. Wherever he was, his eyes were lamps that, as it were, shone-out by daylight. Everybody must see HIM, when he chose. As to his age—it was impossible to tell what his age was. He might have been thirty—one would think. He might

* I can verify the number, and I will do so if my readers—or any one among them seriously desiring the certainty—should wish it.

have been thrice thirty—for the man had a face for a frame; in which you saw very many other faces. These resemblances came and went like the dark clouds and the light clouds in the summer sky—in which we likewise look for faces. If you were young—there were ages and ages of beautiful thought to you upon that brow. The countenance was as a map of the world; marked with all the lines of latitude and longitude. If you were old—the face of this strange being seemed to pass back, flying fast—faster than you could follow—into his youth. He seemed to go where you could by no means follow or track him—for the visionary barriers lifted to *him*, but closed rigidly and like Death when you sought to look in after him. Dead leaves and ruins (thus when left) were *for you*. Sunshine, and the glorious bloom of youth and beauty, were for him—for he went where *you* could not follow—there BACK into that Past. Thence—seemingly—back and along those innumerable past roads of the centuries, bringing thither his Undying Life. Issuing from thence he seemed to come—traversing back the old time—the same yesterday, to-day, and to-morrow—He and the Sun seemed one. Reader, if you are a speculating, thoughtful, imaginative person, and if you could have seen the face of this strange Mr. Carrodus, (to my grief and mortification I have lost sight of him now, and know not where he is)—there would have gleamed up from the lines and marks of that—rightly looked-at—mighty, beautiful face, the now “cold fires” of extinct volcanoes, as it were—read-about probably, or witnessed, and not experienced personally. Innumerable passions were there in all their human changes—thoughts, speculations, triumphs of the application of mind. Battle-wrecks and experience were written all over the changes of his countenance. There was life, and the grand stir of life—fleshy and ghostly. Mr. Carrodus—for that was his name—seemed a man left on the “Ebb of Time.” He impressed, when he grew strong in his talk, as if he had only just stepped down accidentally from his private chamber (where he had left all the historical characters of the periods in

full face to face contact of discourse with him) to interchange at this moment confidence with *you*.

As I was a great lover of books, and moreover as I am a very eccentric character—for thus much I am pertinaciously assured by my friends—I became somewhat of a favourite with this unaccountable Mr. Carrodus.



Chair belonging to Mr. Carrodus—in the small old-fashioned House.

He lived in London, where he was very well known. He never seemed to want money; and he always paid his way very regularly—being very careful and particular, and “insisting on his change.” Such a man is respectable, and to be trusted.

After Mr. Carrodus had discovered what sort of

person I was, I was invited on various occasions to tea at his lodgings. He lived at Greenwich; and he used to sit in the Park; or he was to be seen there reading one of his books under a tree in summer. His dwelling was a small, old-fashioned house at the top of Croom's Hill. And in his bedroom, he was almost walled-in with books in his bed. Thus he lived in London, or in the neighbourhood of London (similarly to his residence at Greenwich), for several years. He inspired respect and confidence wherever he went. But he would come-out sometimes with very strange remarks as if he had betrayed himself; when he would instantly stop, and, if possible, turn the conversation—but all was done very naturally. I mean—by implying that he occasionally hazarded strange remarks—which were obviously impossible, and which gave the idea that he had “lost his head” for the moment—that in talk that turned upon historical matters—perhaps occurring ages ago—he would come out with a correction suddenly as to trivial points—*actually as if he had been present at the time*, and was certain from his own personal knowledge that such and such a supposed circumstance *did not* occur—or that such and such a one *did*. This reality opened to the listener, in a moment, a sort of vision of *vraisemblance*; recovering, for instance, for the view, the assassinated-Cæsar from the dead; showing Catherine, the Queen of James the Second of England, watching—huddled with her child—in the heavy plashing rain-storm under the wall at Lambeth Church, while De-Lauzun went to “look for the coach;” the parade of the Earl of Essex through the streets to raise the citizens of London in the time of Queen Elizabeth; when, as Mr. Carrodus once declared as if in a moment of forgetfulness, the “cap of the Earl of Essex (he wore no plume), was blown-off by a sudden puff of wind; and a tall boy, named Pytcherly, ran and recovered it and presented it to the Earl; who turned pale at seeing it ‘inside-out’—(and, as it was whispered—a bone dropped out;”) and such like. In a moment while Mr. Carrodus was talking thus, you would see, as in a glass, all the circumstances of the event, and wake-

up—as if by magic—to see yourself in front of the table, and Mr. Carrodus (the old man), talking to you; with the youth which you had taken FOR HIM retiring from over his shoulder.

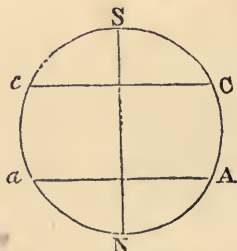
The most unbelievable part of my story is yet to come. And yet it is true. People have not the slightest idea of the wonders of romance that are transacting every day—nay, from obvious reasons, *still more signally at night*—about them here in London: this mighty maze of a Babylon of a capital. It is both real, and unreal, to the last degree. The Great Devil has his spread wings over it. The Angels have their tabernacles of encampment, in their little-suspected recesses, in it. The fires of Hell and the lights of Heaven interchange in this wilderness—this widest of wide awful wildernesses of human-dwellings; having almost only its chimneys as pouring-out its coarse smoky aspirations. God in His infinite mercy—as we unfeignedly think—can alone help the sins of this terrible town. Let the clouds cover it, unless great reforms take place in it soon! Not hypocritical political reforms—but real change—solid change—Christian change.

And yet abundant romance (and virtue too) is in London; which seems—and is—so commonplace.

Therefore commonplace London must be; and true this statement must be in regard of it. Because Human Nature is commonplace, as it touches the earth. It is wondrous and magical—beautiful to the last degree—as it urges on Heaven. There, in mortal life, it cannot enter. But this upper-confine, or the supposed last rim of contact, aspiring to the hoped-for lifting, bended hand of Heaven—this wistful, straining stand-point of the inexpressible human-longing, is on the verge—and essays the outer fence of Paradise—guarded, except to that despairing momentary inlook, by the “Glaives of Fire” of the Seraphs—INTENSE FROM THE THRONE OF GOD.

Back are the immortal longings for restoration revolved; and swift-convicted back into the “Ruin of Mortality” is the quickly-killed hope. There is no hope—and no possibility of rescue into the Kingdom of

God—nothing but the state of the lingering exile—
 “MAN AND WOMAN DRIVEN-FORTH”—whilst that fact
 stands, that (of “human sinful nature”), its clay-girths
 are laid together forged through the Devil’s universal
 lordhood, and worked under its consummate terms—
 the manufactory lighted-up in the splendour of the
 illumination of Hades, the “Place of Ill and Woe”—
 the Devil’s Own Terrible Hold—the Pandemonium
 blazing like a world with its Sinister Glories. For the
 cradle of the human race is “ASHES”—grand and glo-
 rious and tremendous cradle beyond word or idea. And
 the whole round of That Scope of the Senses is the lees
 and siftings, and the sedimentary deposit (so to speak)
 of the “Immortal Light”—purged wholly of itself.
 For of dead earth is the world; and is “Man:”—the
 flux of the “Fire”—First—Last—and Best. Best of
 all—because the “creature” has a soul that “can know
 God.”



“Lines of travel of the real disciples of Theophrastus Paracelsus:”—that is, traversing the
 longitude and latitudes.



EXTRACTS FROM THE EDITOR'S WRITTEN OBSERVATIONS AT THE TIME.

MR. CARRODUS was accustomed to absent himself for, sometimes, considerable periods from his place of residence, and from the sight (and indeed knowledge) of his friends.

In the early part of the year 1870—I think it was about the first of March—Mr. Carrodus, at the conclusion of one of our philosophical evenings, told me that he was going to Paris on the next day; that he should be absent some time. And he gave me this information with proper precautions—as thus:—If I found that “something had happened to him” (he evaded my inquiries as to what he meant), he requested that I would act upon a “power of attorney” which he left with me; and that I would sell-off his furniture and effects which he possessed at Greenwich, and lodge the proceeds, in money—“cash,” he said; “no ‘bonds,’ or ‘shares,’ or ‘promises,’ or ‘contingencies;’ or anything of that so frequently fallacious, windy kind,” with the Magistrate’s Clerk (to the kind care of the ‘Sitting Magistrate’) at the Police Court at Greenwich. All this was done—as the reader will find—scrupulously, and I hope honourably, when I had the occasion; and when the duty fell on me.

I really do not know what has become of Mr. Carrodus. I have never seen him since: nor have I heard of him once except in the following way.

I received a letter from him, when he was in Paris ; desiring me to act upon the above-named disposition of his property. I was told to search in an old sea-chest with the arms of the ancient "Dutch Republic" painted upon it, and with a solid iron lock upon its front like that to a church door. Mr. Carrodus kept this chest in a corner in his bedroom under a dozen Viennese blankets. And an immense furred cloak from Astrakan, considerably the worse for wear, used to be loosely thrown over it ; upon which a cat dozed.

According to Mr. Carrodus's minute directions, therefore, in a lock-up quaintly constructed in a corner of this old box, I discovered (covered with some reverend Latin books) a parcel of papers—very neatly kept. In his well-known, small, beautiful, carefully-punctuated handwriting I came upon THIS—placed in an envelope directed to me, and sealed with the "Carrodus *wyvern*." The words were these :—

"MY DEAR FRIEND H. J.—This manuscript which now comes into your trustworthy hands, owing to a remarkable accident, has formed the labour—'off and on'—(to employ the usual expression) of sixteen years nearly. For I think it right that you should know that I commenced this mysterious book in June, 1856, in London—therefore this is a long period. It may do *you* good. It can do *ME* no good. I do not need any help derivable from it. I seek neither honour nor profit—needing neither. All that I would remark is—THAT IT IS TRUE. The conditions that I impose are that you do it justice in the way in which you print it—in the mode in which you publish. *I have means to punish any infraction of this injunction.* As to the merits of the Book—this is the fact. THAT THOSE WORTHY ONES HAVE COMMENDED IT OF WHOM YOU LITTLE DREAM. If you search in the Encyclopædias you will find accounts of a 'Brotherhood' which is supposed to have existed, and which preferred singular claims adjudged of the most preposterous kind. In all channels except in those supposed to trace from the persons themselves—they are derided as egregious mountebanks where they are not sneered at (objectors have yet a sort of latent fear of doing more than this)—as fools—or at the most as mistaken enthusiasts. I have been in search of traces of this Society FOR A LONG LIFETIME. And in order to discover something to reward me—or at all events to cheer me on—I have wandered into most countries of the world. I am still upon this quest ; important to me—Quixotic—nay, mad to the large—nay, to the immense majority of people. I want seriously to explore to some means of communication with these 'INVISIBLES.' I do not know whether the remainder of my life will admit of this—

IT MAY. These men are the disciples of Theophrastus Paracelsus—of Jacob Böhme or Böhmen. They are innocent, holy—REAL CHRISTIANS. As to the rejection of them—so much for the ‘influence of authority in matters of opinion.’ The world may—or may not—mark their ‘footsteps’ as it pleases. Farewell! I shall always be aware of what you do from that place to which I retire. Farewell, H.—J.—! and prosper. There is something candid, speculative, and unprejudiced about you; otherwise you never would have had any confidential request similar to this addressed to you—least of all any expression of opinions which I may have formed, or any impartment which I might have desired to make to the world—to which ordinary world in no measure do I wish to belong.

“PARIS:—The Tenth of June, 1870.”

Such was this strange letter to me.

*Note:—Remarkable events followed in France after this date; as all the world knows.**

The reader now understands how this Book came into my hands, and he sees (now) that which I have done and am doing with it. I was at first reluctant—very reluctant—to publish. “One of the Thirty”—(this strange work of a very strange man)—is, however, now set afloat in the world of publicity to take its fortune. Go forth, then, thou queer Book of my friend, Mr. Carrodus! Go forth into the “world of thought;” and thou mayest perhaps encounter some persons that will understand thee. As for the general public—they will read thee for thy excitements—thy TRUE excitements. My part in thee is only that of the medium to put thee forth. *Thou art put forth.* Thou hast been conceived and borne—and thou art now “born.” Let the world hear thy infant wail in first drawing the breath of literary life. Thou hast thy name and thy godfather. And now take thy “fortune.” For the never-failing, infallible stars have written it for thee already over

* The reader will remember the *red-crosses* which swept through Western Europe during the latter part of the year 1870 (sign of the R.C.?), and which were to be encountered at every corner even in London, although so unlikely to have such strange marks displayed in it.

thy head—in thy horoscope. For books have horoscopes. As for me—

“I am weary of hunting—
And fain would lie down.”

And I will just close with one word: *Having read the book, if thou likest it—dear reader—say so; and if thou likest the book not—why, say that also—only not in a hurry of objection to it, because that, I am sure would be unworthy my reader.*



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